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TORQUATO TASSO,

A Dramatic Poem,

FROM THE GERMAN OF

GOETHE:

WITH OTHER GERMAN POETRY.

TRANSLATED BY

CHARLES DES VOEUX, Esq.

SECOND EDITION REVISED AND CORRECTED,

WITH ADDITIONS.

WEIMAR MDCCCXXXIII.

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UNIVERSITY
28 FEB 1966
OF OXF
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DEDICATION

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS AUTHOR OF

TORQUATO TASSO,

TO WHOSE

APPROVING KINDNESS AND ENCOURAGEMENT

THE FOLLOWING TRANSLATIONS

OWE THEIR COMPLETION,

THEY ARE MOST GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED BY

ONE OF HIS SINCEREST ADMIRERS.

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My friend Mr. Des Voeux wrote in June 1832 to me: „I have completed my alterations of Tasso, making it more English, — and very little lefs literal. I will send it to you, if you like to have it. Perhaps you might think it well to have it printed at Weimar — under your superintendence if you please.“ According to his wish the printing was not only begun but finished, with the exception of the dedication. I wrote to him about it and received no reply. — I wrote again, — the answer was the news of his death.

Ottilie von Goethe,
geb. *von Pogwisch.*

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INTRODUCTION.

No Apology seems to be necessary for attempting to introduce into the English language a Poem so universally admired in the original as the "TORQUATO TASSO" of Goethe. Those who are acquainted with German literature know how to appreciate it: those who are not, must neither expect to meet in it the terrific nor the marvellous. The story is remarkable for its simplicity, and seems merely to have been used as a vehicle for the expression of certain feelings and sentiments. The delineation of Tasso in the drama is a portrait, of which the sketch and the colouring appear equally familiar to every one conversant with his historic character. It seems impossible to have painted him otherwise than as he is there depicted. A little reflection, however, will convince us that it required the brilliant imagination and acute sensibility of Goethe to conceive and portray so successfully the imagination and sensibility of Tasso. In short, it was impossible that the high-wrought irritability of temperament, and the boundless range of fancy which are so characteristic of

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the Italian poet, could have been comprehended and embodied by one, who was not himself a poet, liable to similar sensations, and gifted with similar powers.

In the character of Leonora d'Este, Goethe has given us an exquisite description of her sex: he has explored the recesses of the female heart; and the undivided admiration of his countrywomen has rewarded his masterly conception of those exalted attributes and feelings, from whose union he has deduced so pure a standard of womanly perfection.

The minor Poems, which form a part of this collection, are derived, as it will be seen, from a variety of sources. It was intended, in the selection of them, to give a specimen of that simplicity and feeling, which may be considered peculiarly characteristic of German poetry.

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

ALPHONSO II. DUKE OF FERRARA.

LEONORA D'ESTE, THE DUKE'S SISTER.

LEONORA SANVITALE, COUNTESS OF SCANDIANO.

TORQUATO TASSO.

ANTONIO MONTECATINO, SECRETARY OF STATE.

The Scene is at Belriguardo, a Country-house belonging to the Duke of Ferrara.

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TORQUATO TASSO:

A Dramatic Poem.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Garden Terrace, with Statues of the Epic Poets. In front of the Scene; on the right, VIRGIL; *on the left,* ARIOSTO.

PRINCESS, LEONORA.

PRINCESS.

THOU look'st in smiles upon me, Leonora,
Then gazing on thyself thou smil'st again;
What whim possesses thee? acquaint thy friend;
Thou seemest thoughtful, yet thou seemest gay.

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LEONORA.

Yes, 'tis with pleasure, princess, I behold
Both of us here thus rurally attir'd;
We look like simple, happy shepherdesses;
And like the happy, too, are we employ'd.
We are entwining garlands. This, of flow'rs,
Swells ever more and more beneath my hand;
Whilst thou with loftier mind, and nobler heart,
Hast chosen thee the pliant, graceful laurel.

PRINCESS.

The twigs, enwoven thus in thoughtful mood,
Have quickly met with temples worthy of them, —
I place them thankfully on Virgil's brow.

(*She puts her garland on Virgil's statue.*)

LEONORA.

And I my full and joyous wreath thus press

(*She puts her garland on Ariosto's statue.*)

On Ludovic's exalted front; for he
Whose wit ne'er faded may with justice claim
An early portion from the youthful spring.

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PRINCESS.

My brother shows his courtesy — so soon
To let us revel in the country air:
We can be all our own; and many an hour
Live dreaming in the poet's golden age.
I love sweet Belriguardo; here I've liv'd
Full many a joyous day of early youth;
And this fresh green, and this reviving sun,
Recall to me the feeling of that time.

LEONORA.

A new-created world encircles us!
These beauteous evergreens already yield
A grateful shade. Again the fountain's murmur
Enlivens us unceasing, while the twigs
Rock themselves waving in the morning wind.
And, from those beds, the flow'rets gaze upon us
With their sweet infant eyes of friendliness.
The gard'ner in full confidence unroofs
His orange and his citron-houses now;
The heav'n above us sleeps in blue repose,
And, on th' horizon, the far mountain's snow
In thin and viewless vapour melts away.

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PRINCESS.

How welcome wouldst thou be to me, O spring,
Didst thou not thus allure my friend away.

LEONORA.

Princess, remind me not in these bright hours
How soon I must be sever'd from thy side.

PRINCESS.

In yonder spacious city thou wilt find
What thou art leaving here redoubled oft.

LEONORA.

The calls of love and duty summon me
To greet a spouse who long hath mourn'd my absence;
I bring to him his son, who hath this year
So grown in stature and accomplishment.
And his fond fatherly delight I share.
Vast Florence is, and gorgeous; yet the worth
Of all its rare accumulated treasures
Cannot in value reach Ferrara's gems.

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That town the people to a town have rais'd,
While, through its princes, is Ferrara great.

PRINCESS.

Rather thro' worthy men, whom chance united,
And who in happy union since have dwelt.

LEONORA.

What chance collects it scatters lightly forth:
The man of noble mind attracts the like,
And, just as ye do, knows to hold him fast;
Around thy brother and round thee entwine
Themselves the spirits, worthy of you both,
As ye are worthy of your ancestry.
'Twas here illum'd itself the full, fair light
Of knowledge, and of free unshackled thought,
While barbarism, with its dim twilight, still
Conceal'd the world around. For me, a child,
Resounded Hercules of Este's name,
And Hippolit of Este's fill'd mine ear.
My Father oft' would sound Ferrara's praise
With that of Rome and Florence, till my heart

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Yearn'd to be there; — a wish at length fulfilled.
Here Petrarch's muse was foster'd and rever'd,
And here his models Ariosto found.
Nor numbers Italy a mighty name,
Whom this proud house hath not receiv'd as guest.
Genius requiteth hospitality,
For when thou givest it the stranger's gift,
It leaves a much more beauteous one behind.
The spot is hallow'd where the good man dwells;
Though centuries have laps'd, his words and deeds
For his remotest offspring still resound!

PRINCESS.

Yes, for his offspring when they feel as thou.
This happiness I oft have envied thee.

LEONORA.

That thou enjoy'st, as few can do besides,
All still and pure. Though my full heart impels
Quickly to utter what I warmly feel,
Thou feel'st it better, deeper, and art mute.
A moment's brilliance cannot dazzle thee;

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Wit can not bribe thy judgment; and in vain
Beguiling flatt'ry fawns upon thine ear;
Firm is thy mind; thy taste correct; and sure
Thy judgment; great, in great things, is thy part,
For what is great thou knowest as thyself.

PRINCESS.

Thou should'st not to o'erweening flatt'ry lend
Attractive friendship's confidential garb.

LEONORA.

Friendship is ever just; 'tis she alone
Can recognize the whole extent oft worth:
And let occasion, if thou wilt, and chance,
Their share of this thy cultivation claim.
Thou hast it still, and hast it undenied —
The world reveres thy sister and thyself
Beyond each noble lady of your time.

PRINCESS.

That touches me but slightly, Leonora,
When I bethink myself how small one is,

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And that we owe to others what we are:
For knowledge of the ancient tongues, and all
Antiquity hath left, I thank my mother:
In wisdom and in sound unbiass'd judgment
No daughter she hath left will equal her;
But should there one of them with her compare,
It is Lucretia's undisputed right.
I can assure thee, too, I never valued
As rank and property what nature's law
Or fortune's wild caprice allotted me.
I am rejoic'd, when men of talent speak,
That I can understand their drift and meaning;
Be it a judgment on a man of times
Gone by, and on the merit of his deeds,
Or on some branch of knowledge a discourse,
Which, when more widely by experience spread,
Is advantageous, as it raises man:
Where conversation with the noble leads
I gladly follow, for I follow free.
I gladly hear the conflict of the wise,
When round the secret force, that stirs in man
The varied sympathies of love and fear,

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The graceful lip of eloquence is playing:
I gladly hear, when glory's princely lust,
And when acquirements, far extended, form
The speaker's theme; and when the dext'rous art
Of master-spirits skilfully unravell'd,
Instead of overreaching us, instructs.

LEONORA.

And when this serious conversation's o'er,
Our listening ear and inmost spirit rest,
With rapture on the poet's golden rhymes,
Who pours his last and loveliest sentiments
Upon our spell-bound souls in tones divine.
Thy lofty spirit a wide realm pervades —
I roam by preference the bounded isle
Of poesy, and haunt its laurel groves.

PRINCESS.

In this fair land of poesy, they say,
The myrtle easily outstrips in growth
All other trees. And though the muses are
Many in number, yet among their train

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We seek more rarely for a friend or playmate,
Than for the poet with his wizard art,
Who seems to shun us, yea, and e'en to fly,
Searching for what is all unknown to us,
Perchance unknown unto his very self!
'T were well if we should meet in happy hour,
And he should recognise, with ecstacy,
In us that holy treasure he had sought
Thro' the world's wide expanse and sought in vain.

LEONORA.

'Tis well! I must e'en let thee have thy jest;
'Tis true it reach'd me, but it struck not deep.
I honor men according to desert,
To Tasso's merit I am only just:
His eye scarce dwells upon this earthly scene;
His ear imbibes all nature's harmony;
What hist'ry reaches, and what life presents,
His breast in pleas'd alacrity absorbs.
What 's widely scatter'd forth his mind collects,
And his deep feelings lend the lifeless life:
That which seems base to us, he oft ennobleth,

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And brands with vileness things esteem'd before.
In his own self-form'd magic circle roams
This strange and wondrous man, and lures us too
To wander with him, and take part in all:
He seems to near us, yet remains afar;
His looks are bent on us, while haply glares
On him some mighty spirit's answering gaze.

PRINCESS.

Thou hast a poet sketch'd, refin'd, and mild,
One who in realms of sweetest dreams doth float;
Yet him, it seems, reality hath charms
To powerfully allure and fast retain.
The beauteous sonnets we are wont to find
Upon our trees appended here and there,
Which, like the golden apples, fragrant form
A new Hesperia — can'st thou not them all
For fairest fruits of true love recognise?

LEONORA.

In these sweet lines I also find a charm:
With genius versatile he celebrates

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One only image in his every rhyme.
Now in bright glory to the starry heav'n
He doth uplift it, and in rev'rence bends
Before its form, as angels o'er the clouds:
Then glides he softly through the silent plain,
And in one garland ev'ry flow'r entwines.
And if his lov'd one roams, he sanctifies
The path her beauteous foot hath lightly trod.
In bushes, like the nightingale, conceal'd
From out his love-sick breast he loudly fills
With saddest notes of woe the grove and air:
His pleasing grief and soul's deep sadness lure
Each ear, and ev'ry feeling bosom must —

PRINCESS.

And when the object of his love he names,
'Tis Leonora that his lips pronounce!

LEONORA.

A name — that fits thee too, as well as me;
And were it not so, I should take it ill.
It doth rejoice me that his love for thee

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He thus in double meanings can conceal.
Content am I, if he but thinks on me
In the enchanting sound of this dear name.
'Tis not a question here of frenzied love,
That seeks excluse mastery of its object,
Ay! to be Lord and paramount! and guard
From ev'ry human eye its treasur'd image.
In hallow'd meditation when he dwells
On thy perfections, may he too on my
More trifling being cast one joyous look.
He loves not us: my honest words forgive!
His dreams of love, deriv'd from many a sphere,
Are centred in one name — the name we bear;
And forc'd to share his feelings, we appear
Touch'd by a human passion, while like him
We only love Love's purest attributes.

PRINCESS.

Thou hast become much deeper, Leonora,
In knowledge of this sort; yet for the things
Thou tellest me, they do but reach mine ear,
And on my soul scarce leave the sligtest trace.

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LEONORA.

Thou Plato's scholar! and not comprehend
What e'en a novice dares to babble forth?
'Tis possible I have deceiv'd myself;
And yet, methinks, I do not wholly err.
Love does not shew itself in this bright school,
As in the olden time, a petted child:
It is the youth that woo'd fair Psyche's charms,
And boasts in the great council of the gods
A seat and voice. He raves not here and there
From breast to breast in wild frivolity:
He doth not bind himself to beauty fast
In quick and wanton error, and atone
A hasty trance with anguish and disgust.

PRINCESS.

There comes my brother; let us not betray
The course in which our converse hath been flowing,
Or we shall have his raillery to bear;
As for his wit our robes have furnish'd sport.

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SCENE II.

ENTER ALPHONSO.

ALPHONSO.

I have been seeking Tasso; but in vain, —
And feel new disappointment not to find
Him here with you. Know ye no tidings of him?

PRINCESS.

I saw him for a moment yesterday; —
To-day he hath not chosen to approach us.

ALPHONSO.

It is an ancient fault of his to dwell
In solitude and shun society.
I can forgive him, when he flies in scorn
The motley million of mankind, preferring
Voiceless communion with his secret soul.
Yet can I not commend him, that he shuns
The circle which his warmest friends compose.

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LEONORA.

An I mistake me not, so wilt thou, prince,
Ere long transform thy blame to commendation.
To day I saw him from afar; he held
A book and tablet — wrote — and walk'd — and wrote:
A passing word he uttered yesterday
Announced, methought, his work's accomplishment.
He doth but strive to add some slight improvement,
That he may tender back a meet oblation
Unto the hand that showers so much on him.

ALPHONSO.

And when he brings it, welcome shall he be,
And shall be pardon'd for his tardiness,
So warm a part in his vast toil I take,
So much, in many a shape, his mighty work
Both does and must rejoice me, and so much
My check'd impatience multiplies at last.
He can nor end, nor meet conclusion find;
He changes always, and advances slow,

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And still looks back, and keeps not pace with hope:
Unwillingly we see a joy postpon'd
Which we had dreamed so near its sweet fulfilment.

PRINCESS.

Much I commend the modesty and care
Of his progressive task. The Muse's favour
Alone unites into one perfect whole
A multitude of verses; and his spirit
Glows with the hope that his digressive lays
May blend in glorious unity. He scorns
The vague accumulation of mere tales
That fascinate, but fade away at last
Indefinite as words of emptiest sound.
Molest him not, my brother; 'tis not time
Should mete the progress of a noble work:
The poet's century must forget itself,
To let succeeding ages share its triumph.

ALPHONSO.

Let us, lov'd sister, in close concert work;
As for our mutual good we oft have done!

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Thy soothing shall atone for my impatience;
Art thou too gentle, I will spur him on.
We then shall see him at the goal, perhaps,
Which we so long have wish'd that he should reach:
Then shall his father-land, and then the world
In admiration ponder o'er his work.
I too will claim my share of his renown,
And he will make his entry into life.
The gifted man finds in no narrow circle
His model. 'Tis his country and the world
Must work on him; and teach him to endure
Th' extremes of praise and blame. He is compell'd
Rightly to know himself and others too.
No more will solitude in flatt'ry rock him;
Now *will* not foes, nor *dare* his friends be lenient.
Boldly the youth makes trial of his strength,
Feels what he is, and feels himself a man.

LEONORA.

So wilt thou still, my lord, do all for him;
As thou hast been his patron hitherto.
A talent doth in stillness form itself —

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A character on life's unquiet stream.
Oh! may his feelings, as his poet skill
Be on thy doctrine form'd! Oh! may he shun
Mankind no longer; and may his suspicions
Be not transform'd at last to fear and hatred!

ALPHONSO.

Mankind fear they, who do not know mankind;
He who avoids them will too soon mistake them.
That case is his; and thus will, by and by,
His freeborn spirit be restrain'd and curb'd.
How oft' doth he about my favour take
More thought than is beseeming, and display
Mistrust for many, who, I know it well,
Are not his foes. Perchance his letters fail;
Perchance his servant seeks some other lord;
Or that he misses papers from his desk:
There quick he sees design and treachery,
And malice, undermining all his fate.

PRINCESS.

And yet, my brother, we must ne'er forget

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That from himself a man can never flee.
And if a friend, who haply wanders with us,
Should wound his foot, we walk on lingeringly,
Extending to his aid our willing hand
In kind support.

ALPHONSO.

And yet 'twere better, far,
If his complaint were capable of cure,
To seek from skilful leech a remedy,
And with the heal'd one then, in joyous mood,
Tread life's invigorated path anew.
And yet I hope that I, fair dames, shall ne'er
Be burden'd with the rough physician's guilt:
I do my utmost to sustain his soul
In firm and confident security.
How oft in crowded presence have I giv'n him
Undoubted proofs of favour. If he urges
A suit, it is investigated straight;
'Twas thus I did when recently he thought
His chamber forc'd. As nought was then reveal'd,
I show'd him calmly how I view'd the thing.

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As all must be employ'd, on Tasso I
Employ my patience, since he merits it;
And ye, I know, most willingly assist.
But 'tis enough. I have conducted you
To this fair landscape, and at eve return.
Ye will for one brief moment see Antonio;
He comes from Rome, and takes me up. We both
Have work for speech and action. Our resolves
Must be confirm'd, and letters straight despatch'd —
All which necessitates my quick return.

PRINCESS.

Dost thou allow us to go back with thee?

ALPHONSO.

Remain ye here at Belriguardo — go
Together to Gonsandoli — enjoy
These beauteous days with unimpair'd delight.

PRINCESS.

Canst thou not stay with us? and thy affairs
Arrange as well when here as at the palace?

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LEONORA.

Tak'st thou Antonio in such haste away,
Who hath so many things from Rome to tell us?

ALPHONSO.

It must be so, ye children; yet I will
Return with him, as soon as possible;
Then shall he all recount; and ye shall aid
Me in commending him, who hath so much
For my good service toil'd himself anew.
And when we have unburden'd all our thoughts,
Then may the crowd advance, and sportive play
In these our royal gardens, that, as is
But fair, some beauty in the verdant shade
May, when I seek her, gladly meet my steps.

LEONORA.

We will discreetly through our fingers look.

ALPHONSO.

In that, ye know, I too have room to spare.

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PRINCESS.

(*Turned to the Scene.*)

Already Tasso I behold afar;
With measur'd step he comes; and now and then
Stands still awhile, as undecided; then
More hastily retires from us, and keeps
Aloof.

ALPHONSO.

Whene'er he is immers'd in thought
And poesy, disturb not his fair vision,
But let him wander in his dreamy mood.

LEONORA.

He sees us now, and hitherwards he comes.

SCENE III.

ENTER TASSO.

TASSO.

Slowly I come to tender thee my work,
And linger yet before I give it thee.

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I know so well it is imperfect still,
E'en though perhaps it may appear concluded.
But were I apprehensive of presenting
It incomplete to thee, there then would reign
A newer source of grief; for might I not
Too timorous — might I not e'en thankless seem?
A man can only say, lo! here am I —
That friends may spare him and enjoy themselves,
So I can only say to thee: — Receive!

ALPHONSO.

Thou dost surprise me with thy welcome gift,
And mak'st this beauteous day a festival.
So then at length I hold it in mine hand,
And deem it in a certain sense mine own!
Long have I wish'd thou might'st content thyself,
And say conclusively, — it is achieved!

TASSO.

If ye are but content, it is complete;
To you it doth in ev'ry sense belong.
If I but thought upon the pains I've us'd,

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Did I but look to what my pen hath trac'd,
I might with justice say this work is mine:
But if I look more near; whate'er it boasts
Of inward worth and high-born dignity,
I know it well, is all deriv'd from thee.
When Nature shower'd on me the gift of song
In rich caprice with such a bounteous hand,
Remorseless Fortune, with infuriate force,
Did thrust me from her sunny side away:
And though the beauteous world's abundance lur'd
The youth's bright gaze in glorious splendour on,
Yet soon his heart was aching for the pangs
Unmerited of lov'd and loving parents.
And if his lip unclosed itself to sing,
From it there flow'd a sad and woful lay; —
And I accompanied, in softest tones,
A father's sorrow and a mother's woe!
'T was thou alone, who from a bounded life
To liberty's fair height didst raise me! — thou
Removed'st from my brow each wasting sorrow,
And gav'st me freedom, that my flame-wing'd soul
Might be unfolded in ennobling song:

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And now whatever praise my work receives,
'Tis you I thank, to you it doth belong.

ALPHONSO.

A second time thou meritest all praise,
And in thy meek becoming modesty
Dost equal honor to thyself and us.

TASSO.

O could I say how joyous is my heart,
That all I give I owe *to you alone!*
Could he the deedless youth from out himself
Extract the poesy? did he contrive
The perfect guidance of the raging fight?
The skill in arms, which ev'ry hero proves
At his appointed time in vigour bold,
The general's art, the valour of the knight,
How craft and vigilance in conflict strove:
Hast thou not, wise and valiant prince, infus'd
All this, and more, in me; as though thou wert
My Genius, glorying to reveal through me, —
A lowly denizen of earth, — thine own
Immortal essence, unattainable?

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PRINCESS.

Enjoy the work which so rejoices us!

ALPHONSO.

Rejoice thyself in each good man's applause!

LEONORA.

Enjoy the meed of unconfin'd renown!

TASSO.

To me this very moment is enough;
I only thought on you when I compos'd,
To please you was my labour's dearest aim,
The proudest object of my anxious homage.
Who sees not in his friends the world entire,
Deserves not that the world takes note of him.
Here is my father-land, the circle here,
In which my soul most fondly loves to dwell,
He do I hearken and observe each look.
Here speak, conjoin'd, experience, knowledge, taste!

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The world and after-world before me stand.
The many make the poet shy and coy;
'Tis only those, like you, can know and feel;
'Tis only those should judge and recompense!

ALPHONSO.

If, then, for world and after-world we stand,
It is not right that idly we receive.
The beauteous token worthy of the bard,
And which the hero, who requires it ever,
Beholds, unenvying, twin'd amid his locks,
I see upon thy predecessor's brow.
Has chance, or some propitious genius, woven
And brought it here? 'tis not in vain it hath
Display'd itself: I hark while Virgil says:
„Why honour ye the dead? they had their meed
„Of praise and joy while yet they were alive;
„And though ye cultivate and worship us,
„Yet let the living have their lawful share.
„With wreaths enough my marble form is deck'd;
„To buoyant life those verdant twigs belong."

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LEONORA.

Dost thou refuse? See what a hand is giving
That wreath so fair, and so imperishable!

TASSO.

O let me wait! I cannot now divine
How I shall live, when this sweet hour is past.

ALPHONSO.

In full enjoyment of that noble prize
Which seems at first to give thee such alarm.

PRINCESS.

Tasso, thou giv'st me the rare joy of breathing
My secret thoughts, and with a voiceless lip.

TASSO.

Thus kneeling, let my feeble brow receive
From these loved hands my glorious recompense.

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LEONORA.

Live for the first time now with garland crown'd!
How much that wreath becomes the modest man!

ALPHONSO.

'Tis but an emblem of that crown, which will
Upon the capitol adorn thy brow.

PRINCESS.

Far louder voices will salute thee there,
Here friendship with her gentle lip commends.

TASSO.

O take it from my worthless brow away!
Remove it far! it doth but singe my locks!
And as a sun-beam, which in mid-day heat
Might reach my brow, it burns the vital force
Of thought from out my brain. A fever's rage
Bestirs my blood. Your pardon! 'tis too much!

LEONORA.

Yon wreath cools rather and protects his brow,

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Whose envied destiny it is to roam
O'er high-born glory's ever-scorching path.

TASSO.

I am unworthy such a cooling wreath,
It should but wave around the hero's brow.
O take it off, ye gods! and let it shine
Star-like amid the clouds, and float, ascending,
And unattainable, — while wandering on
My soul may ever seek so bright an aim.

ALPHONSO.

He, who hath earn'd by times, by times hath learnt
To prize the worth of life's exalted goods;
And he, who hath enjoyed, is ne'er bereft,
Without a struggle of his once belov'd possession;
And all who have possession must be armed!

TASSO.

And who would arm himself, a strength must feel
Within him, which at need will not refuse.
Ah! it refuses now! in happiness

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Deserts me that almighty inborn strength
Which taught me once misfortune to oppose
With steadiness, and wrong with pride. Hath joy,
And this bright moment's thrilling ecstacy
Dissolv'd my tott'ring limbs internal force?
My trembling knees are sinking, and again
Thou seest me, princess, bow'd before thee low!
O listen to my prayer! remove it far!
That I, as waken'd from a fairy dream,
A new and renovated life may feel.

PRINCESS.

But since that talent which the gods have giv'n,
Thou canst in such meek modesty support,
Then also learn these laurel twigs to bear —
They are the fairest we could give to thee.
Eternally they float around that brow,
Where they have once with justice been entwin'd.

TASSO.

O let me then in bashfulness retire,
Let me my happiness in groves conceal,

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Where once my sorrows I was wont to hide.
There will I wander lonely, where no eye
My undeserv'd good fortune calls to mind.
And if by chance a limpid fountain shews
A man in its pure mirror, who, bedeck'd
With strange and wondrous garlands, 'mid the heav'n's
Reflected splendour, 'twixt the trees and rocks
In meditation rests; I seem to see
On this enchanted plain Elysian bow'rs
Portray'd. Yet I bethink myself, and ask,
Who may this lonely mortal be? a youth
From out the time gone by? so fair bewreath'd?
Who tells me, or his name, or his deserts?
I pause, and wait, and think: O might there come
Another, and another but with him,
In sweet and friendly converse to unite!
O might I see around this fountain's brink
The bards and heroes of the olden time!
O might I see them all united here,
As if they were in life thus firmly bound!
For as the magnet's pow'r invisible

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Binds unconnected iron fast, the same
Bold aim unites the hero and the bard:
Homer lost sight of self, his dreamy life
Was but a contemplation of two men;
And Alexander in Elysian plains
Hasten'd Achilles and his bard to find;
O would that I were present there, to see
These mighty souls in harmony combin'd!

LEONORA.

Awake! awake! nor let it be perceived
Thou hast forgot the presence where we stand.

TASSO.

It is this presence that exalts me so;
I am entranc'd, and only seem to wander.

PRINCESS.

When thou with spirits talkest, I rejoice
Thou speak'st so humanly — I gladly list.

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[*A Page enters, and whispers to* ALPHONSO.]

ALPHONSO.

He is arriv'd at his appointed hour.
Antonio! bring him here: — see, there he comes!

SCENE IV.

ANTONIO ENTERS.

ALPHONSO.

Right welcome thou! who bring'st to us, at once,
Thyself, and good intelligence.

PRINCESS.

All hail!

ANTONIO.

Scarce dare I now confess to you the joy
That in your presence renovates my life.

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In you I find what I so long had miss'd.
You seem content with what I have accomplish'd,
And thus am I rewarded for my cares,
For many a day impatiently lagg'd through,
For many a day designedly consum'd:
But all our wishes are at length attain'd,
And now no controverted point remains.

LEONORA.

I, too, salute thee; though I am displeas'd
Thou only com'st when I am forc'd to go.

ANTONIO.

My happiness would not complete itself,
Thou quickly tak'st the fairest part away.

TASSO.

Receive my welcome too! I hope to reap
Advantage from the much-experienc'd man.
Thou 'lt find me true at least, when from thy world
Thou deign'st to cast a wand'ring glance on mine.

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ALPHONSO.

Although thou hast in thy despatch announc'd
What thou hast done, and how it far'd with thee,
Yet still I have to ask thee much, and how
The treaty terminated in success?
Upon that magic ground must ev'ry step
Be measur'd, that it may at last conduct
Us to the object, we at first desir'd.
Who thinks upon his master's weal alone,
Has not a toilless part to play in Rome;
For Rome will grasp at all, and nought concede.
E'en they who go expressly to receive,
If they bring nothing there, take nothing thence;
And fortunate is he who then succeeds.

ANTONIO.

It neither was my conduct, nor intrigue,
By which, my lord, your wish hath been attain'd:
For who so shrewd but in the Vatican
Would find his master? Much occurr'd, at once,
That I could turn to unforeseen advantage.

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For Gregory hails, salutes and honours thee!
That sage, the worthiest on whose brow a crown
Is gleaming, thinks with joy upon the time
When thou wert in his arms entwin'd. The man
Who best discriminates mankind, both knows
And honours thee! and labours in thy cause.

ALPHONSO.

His good opinion pleases me, as far
As 'tis sincere. But yet thou knowest well
They see e'en empires from the Vatican
Quite small enough beneath their feet display'd,
And smaller still the people and their lords.
Confess me now what most hath aided thee!

ANTONIO.

Yes! when thou will'st: — the pontiff's noble mind,
He sees the small as small, the great as great;
And that he may direct the world, he yields
With friendly zeal unto his neighbour's wish:
He knows the value of the strip of land
He yields to thee, and of thy friendship too.

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He would have Italy be undisturb'd,
And only friends around him; and would keep
Peace on his frontiers, that the gather'd might
Of Christendom, which his direction guides,
May Turks and heretics o'erwhelm in turn.

PRINCESS.

And is it known to whom he shows most favour?
And who most trustily approach his counsels?

ANTONIO.

'Tis but th' experienc'd that possess his ear,
The energetic his confiding aid:
For he, who from his youth hath serv'd the state,
Directs it now; and works in those same courts,
Which erst already, as ambassador,
He hath inspected, known, and guided oft.
The world as clearly lays before his view,
As the true interest of his own domains.
We praise him when we see him act, and feel
A secret joy when time uncovers what
In secret he hath long contriv'd and toil'd.

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No sight more fair th' extended world presents,
Than when we see a prince who wisely rules:
A kingdom, too, where all with pride obey;
Where each man thinks he only serves himself,
Because 'tis only Justice that commands.

LEONORA.

How eagerly I wish sometime to view
Yon world more near!

ALPHONSO.

Rather to toil in concert!
Looks will not form fair Leonora's limit;
And joyful were my heart, my beauteous friend,
If in the mighty game our tender hands
Might meet commingling; — speak, would it not please thee?

LEONORA.

Thou would'st incite me: it succeedeth not.

ALPHONSO.

I yet am in arrears for days gone by.

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LEONORA.

To day I still remain in debt to thee!
Forgive! and do not interrupt my questions.
Say, for his nephews has he had much care?
[*To* ANTONIO.]

ANTONIO.

Nor less, nor more, than what is fair and just:
They who in power neglect the claims of kindred
Are by the lowest rabble blam'd and scorned.
But Gregory hath resolv'd in moderation
To benefit his relatives who serve
The state as honest men; — thus with one care
Two kindred duties he at once fulfils.

TASSO.

And do advancing knowledge and the arts
Receive his favour too? and rivals he
The mighty princes of the olden time?

ANTONIO.

He honours knowledge, when its tendency

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Teacheth to rule the state, and know mankind:
He prizes art, so far as it adorns
And amplifies his Rome, — and as it rears
For wonderment of earth the hall and fane.
In his vicinity must nought be idle!
Who seeketh his esteem, must toil and serve.

ALPHONSO.

And think'st thou then this treaty will be soon
Completed? and that they will not at last
Strew here and there unseen impediments?

ANTONIO.

I err indeed, if quickly by thy name's
Subscription, and a few despatches sent,
This strife will not be finally arrang'd.

ALPHONSO.

This moment of my life I would select
As a bright time of fortune and success.
I see my frontiers widen'd, and I know
Them for the future safe. Without the sword

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Thou hast accomplish'd all:—a civic crown
Is well thy hard-earn'd due. And our fair dames
On some bright morn, from spring's first oaken leaves,
Shall round thy brow in woven wreath entwine it.
Yet meanwhile Tasso hath enrich'd me too;
He hath Jerusalem for us subdued,
And put existing Christendom to shame:
He hath a distant aim, high pois'd in air,
With spirit gay, and struggling toil, attain'd.
For his success thou seest him here enwreath'd.

ANTONIO.

Thou dost resolve a riddle. For I saw
Two deck'd with wreaths in mute astonishment.

TASSO.

I wish thou couldst my bashful feelings scan
E'en with the self-same searching glance that now
Gazes so keenly on my new-born honours.

ANTONIO.

'Tis long since I have known that in rewards

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Alphonso is most prodigal; and thou
Hast now the proof the rest have had before.

PRINCESS.

Hadst thou first looked upon his high achievment,
Thou wouldst have found us just and moderate.
We are but here the first still witnesses
Of that applause the world will not refuse,
And which posterity will tenfold yield.

ANTONIO.

He is through you already sure of fame;
Who dares to doubt, where ye are known to prize?
Yet tell me who this garland hath entwin'd
On Ariosto's brow?

LEONORA.

This hand it was.

ANTONIO.

'Tis done right well! and nobly decorates him,
As e'en the laurel would not grace him so:

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For just as nature clothes her teeming breast
In green and party-colour'd robe by turns,
So what can render man a source of love,
Or child of glory, he hath all conceal'd
In frolic fable's ever-blooming garb.
Contentment and experienced cleverness,
And Talent's power, and taste, and feeling pure
For real good, in spirit-forms appear
Throughout his lays; and yet in person seem
As under perfume-breathing trees to rest,
Besprinkled with the blossom's snowy show'r,
With roses garlanded, in juggle form'd
By sportive Cupid's strange and magic play.
A fount of flowing plenty murmurs there;
And lets us gaze on fish of ev'ry hue.
With all the strangest plumages the air,
With rarest herds the mead, and dell is fill'd,
And waggery lurks in bushes half conceal'd;
And wisdom's voice from out a golden cloud,
Tones forth from time to time sublimest words.
Meanwhile, from well-according lutes, all wild
Appeareth phrenzy here and there to rave,

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And yet with nicest skill her balance keeps.
Who near this man hath dar'd to risk himself,
A wreath for his audacity deserves.
Forgive me since I feel myself inspir'd,
That I lose sight, like some bewildered being,
Of time, and place, and mine own words intention.
For all this poet-throng, these chaplets gay,
And, beauteous dames, your robes of festival
Withdraw me from myself to fairy land.

PRINCESS.

Who knows so well one merit to esteem
Will not mistake the other. *Thou* shalt be
The first to show to us in Tasso's lays
What *we* have felt, but only *thou* hast known.

ALPHONSO.

Antonio, come with me; for I have much
To ask, whereof I am most curious:
Then shalt thou till the setting of the sun
Unto the dames belong. Come, fare ye well!

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ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Saloon.

PRINCESS. — TASSO.

TASSO.

Faltering, my footsteps follow thee, oh! Princess,
And unrestrain'd and measureless ideas
Arise tumultiously within my soul.
For solitude appears to beckon me,
And gently whisper: „Let me solve the doubt
„That racks thy breast anew with visions wild."
Yet if I cast one look on thee; and if
A word from thy sweet lip but reach mine ear,
A new and brilliant day expands around me,
And all my loosen'd bonds fall gently off.

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I will in frankness own to thee, the man
Who unexpectedly broke in on us,
Awoke me roughly from my beauteous dream;
His whole deportment and his taunting words
Have touch'd me so, that more than ever are
My feelings rent in twain, and with myself
In puzzling strife I am again confus'd.

PRINCESS.

It is not possible an ancient friend,
Who long a strange and distant life hath led,
Can feel the very moment that again
He sees us, as he felt before his absence.
He cannot be in his interior chang'd:
Let us but live with him a few days more,
And ev'ry string will harmonise again,
'Till happily one sweet accord shall bind
Them all anew. For when he fully knows
What thou hast in the intervening time
Plann'd and accomplish'd, he will surely place
Thee by the poet's side, whom now he rears
Against thee, like a mighty giant's form.

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TASSO.

In sooth, my princess, Ariosto's praise
From him hath more delighted me than e'er
It could annoy. It is consoling when
We know the man is held in honour, who
Before our eyes a mighty model stands;
For in the heart's recess we then can say,
If thou attain'st a part of his success,
A part of his renown awaits thee too.
Ah! no; what hath my bosom's depth bestirr'd,
And what e'en now my soul feels through and through,
It is the images of yonder world,
Which, most vivacious, restless, and immense,
Around one only great and gifted man
Revolv'd, and that sublime career fulfill'd
This demigod had dar'd prescribe to it.
I listen'd eagerly, and heard with joy
Th' unerring words of that experienc'd man:
Yet, ah! the more I heard, the more and more
I sank before myself, and fear'd to die

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Like echo on the crags away, and be
A mere reverberation, lost in nought.

PRINCESS.

And yet thou didst but now so purely feel
How bards and heroes for each other live —
How bards and heroes seek out one another,
Unsullied by base envy's vulgar taint.
Right noble is the lay-deserving deed;
'Tis noble, too, the strongest plenitude
Of deeds to give posterity in song.
Content thyself from out the little state,
Whose laws protect thee, quietly to gaze,
As from the shore, upon the world's wild course.

TASSO.

Did I not first behold with wonder here
The noble recompense that waits the valiant?
For here, I came, an inexperienc'd boy;
And quickly festival on festival
To honour's highest pinnacle appear'd

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To raise Ferrara. What a sight was that!
A circle was around the spacious square,
Where dext'rous valour was before your gaze
Proudly to shew itself; nor will the sun
Soon shed its rays upon the like again.
In crowds compress'd, sat there the fairest dames,
And there our age's most illustrious men.
Our startled look ran through the noble throng:
With joy we said: All these the father-land,
The one, the narrow, sea-surrounded land
Hath hither sent. Together did they form
The first tribunal that in honour's lists
Had e'er decided upon valour's worth.
And if we tried them singly through, we found
Not one that need his noble neighbour shame.
And when the lists were open'd and arrang'd,
Then stamp'd the steed, and glanc'd the helm and shield,
Then press'd the crowd of squires, and then there clang'd
The trumpet's note, and shiv'ring lances crack'd;
Each helm and shield resounded, and the dust
In one brief moment in its whirls conceal'd
The victor's honour and the vanquish'd' shame.

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Oh! let me draw a curtain'd veil before
This bright dramatic scene, for me too clear,
Lest in this moment of delight my own
Unworthiness may be too keenly felt

PRINCESS.

And when yon noble circle yonder deeds
To toil and strife thy soul inflam'd; I could,
At that same time, have giv'n thee, youthful friend,
A quiet lesson of enduring patience.
The festival, which thou commendest so,
And which a hundred tongues did then — and have,
For many a year, extoll'd — I dit not see.
In yon still spot, where scarce in broken sounds
The last reverberation of delight
Could lose itself, was I compell'd to bear
Full many a woe, and many a sadd'ning thought.
With broadest wings death's phantom-form was floating
Before mine eyes, and from my view conceal'd
The prospect of the ever-changeful world.
But by and by it was withdrawn; and let
Me look, as through a veil of gauze, on life's

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Commingled hues, though pale, yet pleasing still:
For living forms I gently saw return;
And for the first time, aided by my dames,
From out the chamber of disease I stepp'd.
Then came Lucretia full of joyous life,
And led thee here with kindly-guiding hand:
Thou wert the first, who in my new-born life
Didst stand before me, new, and undefin'd.
Then hop'd I much for thee, and for myself;
Nor hath that flatt'ring hope betray'd us yet.

TASSO.

And I, who then was dizzied by the throng
Of that compressing crowd, and dazzled too
By such a varied gaze, nor yet unmov'd
By many a passion, through the corridors
Pac'd in still silence at thy sister's side;
And then the chamber enter'd, where thou cam'st,
Supported on thy dames, to greet us. Heav'ns!
Oh! what a moment this for me! Forgive!
The Godhead's near vicinity hath pow'r
To heal the spell-bound from his frenzied state,

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And so was I from ev'ry phantasy,
From ev'ry passion, ev'ry false desire,
By one look on thy meeting look reclaim'd.
And if my wild desires, undisciplin'd,
Were erst upon a thousand objects lost,
Now for the first time on myself I look'd
In shame, and learnt a worthy wish to know.
In vain upon the sea's extended sand
We seek the pearl, which in its silent shell
Conceal'd, may long in prison'd rest remain.

PRINCESS.

Ah! those were happy times that then begun;
And had Urbino's duke not ta'en away
My sister from us, years would have been spent
By us in fairest, unimpair'd delight.
Yet now, to our regret, we miss too much
The talent gay, the heart so full of life,
The rich and varied wit of that sweet woman.

TASSO.

I know it but too well; for since the time

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She went and no one hath as yet replac'd
Thy smiling joy upon its former base.
How oft my breast was torn! how oft have I
My pangs for thee to silent groves bewail'd!
„Had then," I cried, „her sister only right
„To be unto the lov'd one all in all?
„And has no other heart the worth that she
„May dare to trust it? can no feelings more
„With her's accord? is wit and talent dimm'd?
„And was one woman, then, all excellent
„Though she may be, the whole?" Forgive! forgive!
Then thought I oft upon myself, and wish'd
To thee I might be something. Much though not —
Yet something still; — and not in words, but deeds
I wish'd to be it, and to shew in life
I bore for thee a still devoted heart.
And yet it did not prosper, oft I did
In error that, which could but cause thee pain;
The man whom thou protectedst, did offend;
And, what thou would'st unravel, oft confus'd;
And always in that moment felt myself
More far and far, whene'er I would approach.

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PRINCESS.

Thy meaning, Tasso, I have never yet
Mistaken; and I know how busy thou
Art ever to annoy thyself. Unlike
My sister, who with ev'ry one can live,
Thou scarce, when years have pass'd, can'st learn to know
The humours of a friend.

TASSO.

Oh! blame me, blame;
Yet tell me where the man is to be found?
The woman where? to whom, as now to thee,
I dare my bosom's secret thoughts unfold.

PRINCESS.

Unto my brother may'st thou all confide.

TASSO.

He is my lord and prince! and think not now
That freedom's wild desire my bosom swells;
Man was not born for boundless liberty.

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The noble mind no higher fortune knows,
Than when it serves a prince, whom it reveres.
And thus is he my master, and I feel
The whole extent of that unbounded word:
For if he speaks, I must be silent then;
And do what he may bid — e'en though my heart
And understanding vividly refuse.

PRINCESS.

That ne'er can happen with my noble brother.
And since we have Antonio back again,
Thou hast, no doubt, a new and prudent friend.

TASSO.

I hop'd it once, but almost doubt it now.
Yet how instructive would his converse be!
How useful in a thousand ways his aid!
For he possesses all that fails in me.
Yet if the other gods have all conjoin'd
To bring rare gifts unto his infant cradle,
Alas! the Graces have remain'd behind:
On whom these goddesses have nought bestow'd,

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Possess what gifts he may, — yield what he will, —
None can repose upon a breast like his.

PRINCESS.

One can confide in him — and that is much:
Require not all things from one mortal man;
Yet all he promises he well performs;
When once he hath declar'd himself thy friend,
He cares for thee where thou dost fail thyself.
Ye still must be united, and I hope
Most briefly to arrange this happy work.
But hang not back as thou art wont to do!
Though we have long possess'd our Leonora,
Refin'd and graceful as she is, to live
With whom it is most easy, yet e'en her
Thou ne'er would'st meet as warmly as she wish'd.

TASSO.

I have obey'd thee well, or else I had
Instead of nearing her, withdrawn myself.
And though she can appear so amiable,
I know not how it is, with her I could

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But seldom dare unfold myself; for when
She hath the purpose to assist a friend,
We feel the purpose, and become untun'd.

PRINCESS.

In this way, Tasso, we should never find
Society; this path would soon mislead
Our steps through many a solitary brake,
And make us wander through the silent dales;
For more and more the character is spoil'd,
It strives to place the golden age within,
That fails externally, yet little doth
This ill-contriv'd experiment succeed.

TASSO.

Oh! what a word my princess hath pronounc'd!
The golden age, oh! whither is it flown?
In vain is ev'ry bosom longing for it!
The time when o'er th' unshackled earth mankind
Wander'd like sportive herds in gay delight;
When in the flow'ry mead some aged tree
Lent shepherds and their mates its friendly shade;

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And when the half-grown bush its twigs entwin'd
Round longing love securely confident;
While clear and still upon the stainless sand
The gentle stream the tender nymph embrac'd —
And when amid the grass the startled snake
Innoxious lost itself, and the bold satyr
By valiant youth repell'd sought flight amain;
When ev'ry bird that skimm'd th' unbridled air
And ev'ry beast that roam'd o'er mount and dell
Whisper'd to man, „what pleases is allow'd."

PRINCESS.

Long since, my friend, the golden age is past;
The good alone can bring it back again:
And if I must confess to thee my thoughts,
The golden age, with which the poets erst
Were wont to flatter us, — that fairy time, —
It *was*, methinks, as little as it *is*:
And if it was — so was it certainly,
As soon it might exist for us again;
For kindred hearts can still unite themselves,
And share the joys of that enchanted world:

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One word alone is in the motto chang'd;
For now, „what is decorous is allow'd."

TASSO.

If form'd of good and noble men alone,
An unconfin'd Tribunal would decide,
What is decorous! but, instead, each thinks
That what is useful is becoming too.
We see that for the mighty and the shrewd
All turns out well, and all too is allow'd

PRINCESS.

But would'st thou clearly know what is becoming;
Seek thy sole knowledge from exalted woman.
To her it is most necessary that all
Should be becomingly perform'd by her;
For modesty encircles with a wall
The tender and the easy-tarnish'd sex.
They reign, where reigns morality; and they,
Where'er immodesty presides, are nought.
And would'st thou have the sexes here describ'd:
At license, man; decorum, woman aims.

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TASSO.

Thou call'st us rough, untam'd, insensible?

PRINCESS.

Not that! — but after distant goods ye strive,
And ever violent your strife must be.
Ye dare for an eternity to act,
While we a single, near, and bounded good
Would only in this nether world possess —
Our warmest wish — that constant it remain.
Of no man's heart can we be ever sure,
However warmly it was once bestow'd:
For beauty is but passing, which alone
Ye seem to honour. What remains, allures
No more; and what allures no more, is dead.
If men there were who knew a female heart
To treasure, and who e'en could recognise
How precious is the prize of truth and love
That woman's breast can in its depths conceal:
And if the memory of enraptur'd hours
Could in your souls but vividly endure;

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Or if your gaze, which else all-piercing is,
Could also pierce the veil, which creeping age
Or mining sickness may around us throw:
If to possess, which ought to tranquillize,
Kindled no lust for joys beyond one sphere,
Then, then, for us a beauteous day would dawn;
We then should celebrate our golden age.

TASSO.

Thou speakest words to me, which have arous'd
E'en now half-slumb'ring sorrows in my breast.

PRINCESS.

What mean'st thou, Tasso? freely speak with me.

TASSO.

I oft have heard, and now this day again
Have heard, yet even had I not been told,
I must have thought it, — noble princes strive
To win thy hand! yet what we must expect
We fear, and almost to despair are driv'n:

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Thou soon wilt leave us, 'tis but natural:
I know not yet how we shall bear the blow.

PRINCESS.

Yet, for this moment, still be free from care!
And almost might I say — for ever free.
I find contentment here, and gladly stay;
I know no tie which can allure me forth:
But if in truth ye would attach me here,
Then let your concord show it, and prepare
Yourselves a happy life, and me through you.

TASSO.

O teach me what is possible to do!
To thee devoted, all my days belong:
For if my heart unfolds itself to praise
And thank thee gratefully 'tis then I feel
The purest happiness that man can know.
The most divine I recognis'd in thee.
The Demigods of earth withdraw themselves
From other men, as destiny sublime
E'en from the plans and will of the most wise

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Maintains itself aloof. For they, when we
See billow upon billow swell, let much
Unnotic'd pass, and like the lightest wave
Just ripple at their feet; nor do they hear
The storm that roars for us, and hurls us o'er:
Our pray'rs they scarce attend to, and permit
Us still, as we do poor unthinking babes,
With sighs and screams to fill the troubled air.
How oft, divine one, hast thou borne with me,
And, like the sun, thy brilliant look hath dried
From off my moisten'd eyes the melting dew!

PRINCESS.

'Tis only fair that women should in turn
Be well dispos'd to one, whose deathless song
Ennobles in a thousand ways our sex.
In gentleness, or might, thou e'er hast known
To represent them noble and refin'd;
And e'en though hateful thy Armida seems,
Her charms and love soon reconcile our minds.

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TASSO.

Yet what in sooth is echo'd in my lay,
To one and one alone I owe it all!
No airy and uncertain image floats
Before my view, which but to dazzle nears
Th' enchanted soul, and soon is torn away:
For with these eyes the archetype I' ve seen
Of ev'ry virtue, and of ev'ry grace.
What I have painted after it will last:
Yes! for Clorinda bold Tancredi's love,
Erminia's still, unmark'd fidelity;
Sophronia's greatness, and Olinda's woe.
They are not shades that have the fancy lur'd;
I know they are eternal — since they are.
And what hath more the right for centuries
To last, and all in stillness work its way,
Than that full mystery of hallow'd love
Which is confided to the lay divine.

PRINCESS.

And shall I tell to thee a quality,

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By which this lay doth steal on us unmark'd?
It lures us on and on, and we do list;
We list, and then we think we understand;
And what we understand we cannot blame;
And thus the lay doth win us at the last.

TASSO.

O what a heav'n is open'd for me now!
My princess, if this vision blinds me not,
I see unhop'd, eternal happiness,
On golden ray majestical descend.

PRINCESS.

No farther, Tasso; many things there are
Which ever must be seiz'd upon in haste;
Yet others still there are, which temperance
And still forbearance only make our own:
And this is said of virtue, or of love,
Which is allied to it. Bethink thee well.

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SCENE II.

ENTER TASSO.

TASSO.

And art thou then allow'd thine eyes to raise?
Or dar'st thou gaze around? — Thou art alone!
Have these cold columns heard what she hath sai'd?
And hast thou then had witnesses to fear,
Dumb witnesses of thy exstatic transport?
The sun illumes a day of new-born life,
Which far outstrips in splendor all the past.
Descending here, the goddess quickly rears
The mortal high aloft; before mine eyes
What circles new, what realms are new display'd!
How richly is my warm wish recompens'd!
I dreamt the highest fortune was at hand,
And this my fortune is beyond all dreams.
The man born blind may fancy, as he will,
Colours and light, yet when the day first dawns

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Upon him, it must be a new sensation.
Intoxicated with delight and hope
This path I tott'ring tread. Thou giv'st me much, —
Thou giv'st, as earth and heav'n are wont to shower
Their gifts on us, with full unmeasur'd hand,
And askest in return what thus to ask
'Tis only such a gift permits the right.
I will forbear, and shew such moderation,
As to deserve what thou hast dar'd confide.
What have I done that she should choose me so?
What shall I do to merit such a choice?
Yet she could trust to thee, and thus thou hast.
Yes, princess, to thy ev'ry word and look
Eternally devoted is my soul!
Yes, ask me what thou wilt, for I am thine;
And send me toil, experience, and renown,
In distant lands to seek, or reach to me
In deeply silent grove the golden lyre,
Devote me to repose and its reward;
Since I am thine, possess and mould me too!
For all its wealth my heart hath kept for thee.
O had a thousand-fashion'd organ been

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By some god giv'n me! scarce could I express
My adoration all unspeakable!
The painter's pencil; — and the poet's lip,
The sweetest lip, that e'er from honied cell
Was fed, I would desire. Yet now no more
Shall Tasso 'mid the trees, and from mankind
Remote, all weak and care-worn, lose himself.
He is no more alone, he is with thee.
O that the noblest deed would represent
Itself before me visibly, girt round
By frightful danger! onward I would press,
And gladly dare the life, that now I have
At her fair hand receiv'd, and I would ask
Most valiant men to be my friends, that with
A noble band what seems impossible
Might be accomplish'd at her wink and will.
Impetuous, why did not thy mouth conceal
The feelings of thy heart, until thou wert
More worthy at her feet to throw thyself?
That was thy project, that thy prudent wish.
Still be it so; yet better is it far
All undeserving such a gift to have,

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Than half and half to dream one might have dar'd
Successfully to ask it. Calmly look!
What lies before thee is so vast and wide;
And youth inspir'd by hope allures thee on
Unto a bright unknown futurity!
My bosom, swell! and fortune's sunny sky,
Do thou beam softly on this plant a while,
It aims at heav'n; a thousand twigs are press'd
From out it upwards, and unfold in buds:
O would that it might bear the fruit of joy!
And that a hand of love might gently break
The golden pride from its luxuriant boughs!

SCENE III.

TASSO. — ANTONIO.

TASSO.

Thou art most welcome here; it seems as though
I see thee for the first time now! and ne'er

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Was man announc'd more fairly. Be right welcome!
I know thee now, and all thy varied worth,
And give without delay my heart and hand,
Hoping that thou wilt not reject the boon.

ANTONIO.

Thou off'rest generously most beauteous gifts;
And I acknowledge, as I ought, their worth:
Before I take them, let me pause awhile.
I know not yet if I can give the like
To thee in turn; and I would willingly
Not overhasty nor unthankful seem.
Let me for both be prudent and reserv'd.

TASSO.

And who will prudence blame? when ev'ry step
Of life declares how needful it may be:
But yet 'tis nobler if the whisp'ring soul
Tells us we do not want such artful foresight.

ANTONIO.

Thereon let ev'ry one himself consult,
Because he must atone the fault himself.

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TASSO.

So let it be: for I have done my duty;
And introduc'd myself to thee, to please
The princess, who desir'd we might be friends.
But though I did not dare hang back, Antonio,
I will not press too forward. For perhaps
Time and a near acquaintance may induce
Thee warmly to demand the gifts, which now
Thou coldly lay'st, almost in scorn, aside.

ANTONIO.

The temperate oft are call'd by those men cold,
Who think themselves more warm than their compeers,
Because a fit of passion seizes them.

TASSO.

Thou blam'st what I have ever blam'd, and shunn'd;
I too, tho' young, can understand that what
Is lasting must e'er have the preference.

ANTONIO.

Right wisely said! continue in that mind.

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TASSO.

Thou hast the right to counsel and to warn;
For at thy side, just as a wary friend,
Approv'd and tried, doth old Experience stand.
Yet think awhile the heart in secret hears
The warning voice of ev'ry day and hour,
And dwells internally on ev'ry good,
Which thy severity would teach anew!

ANTONIO.

With self it is agreeable one's self
To busy, — would it were but useful too!
No man internally his inmost core
Can learn to know; for his own measure metes
Sometimes too small, and oft, alas, too great!
To know himself man only learns from man;
Life teaches ev'ry one his real worth.

TASSO.

With rev'rence and applause I hear thy words.

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ANTONIO.

And yet thou understandest by these words
A sense far diff'rent from their true intention.

TASSO.

In this way nearer we shall ne'er approach.
It is not shrewd, nor is it fairly done,
Perversely to mistake a simple man,
Let him be who he may. The princess' word
Was scarce requir'd; I knew thee easily;
I know thou wishest and promotest good.
For thy own fate thou hast but little care,
Thou think'st on others, and by others stand;
Above the light opposing waves of life
A steadfast heart is thine. I view thee thus.
And what were I, did I not meet thee now, —
Did I not, too, seek eagerly a part
Of that rich, hidden treasure, which thou guardest?
Thou wilt not e'er repent such openness:
Didst thou but know me, thou wouldst be my friend:
Of such a friend I long have felt the want.

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For inexperience and my youth I feel
No shame; since calmly yet around my brow
Futurity's effulgent clouds repose.
O take me, noblest man! unto thy breast;
And me, the inexperienc'd, and the wild,
Initiate in a temperate use of life.

ANTONIO.

In one brief moment thou think'st fit to ask
What circumspectly time alone affords.

TASSO.

In one brief moment love has pow'r to give
What in a longer time toil scarce can yield.
Yet though I dare to ask, I do not beg;
I call on thee in Virtue's sacred name,
Who e'er is zealous to unite the good.
And shall I name to thee another name?
The Princess hop'd it — Leonora wishes
To lead me unto thee, and thee to me.
O let us meet in unison her wish!
Let us before the goddess go united,

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And offer her our service and our souls,
Whate'er is great allied for her to do.
Yet once again! here is my proffer'd hand!
O step not back, deny thyself no more,
Thou noblest man, and grant me this delight,
The fairest privilege of worthy men,
To ope their hearts in candour to their fellows!

ANTONIO.

Thou goest with swelling sails; and it would seem
That thou art wont to triumph, and to find
The causeways ever broad, the portals wide.
I grant thee willingly both ev'ry worth,
And ev'ry fortune, but I clearly see
How far we stand apart from one another.

TASSO.

Perhaps in years, and in the proof of worth;
In courage and desire I yield to none.

ANTONIO.

Desire cannot lure deeds along with it;

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And Courage represents the ways as short. —
Tis he is crown'd, who at the goal succeeds,
Though oft a worthier fails to gain a crown. —
Yet worthless wreaths there are of other fashion!
Which may, perchance, in some snug walk be gain'd.

TASSO.

Yet that, which Heav'n to *this* man freely gives —
To *that* denies — is not a trivial good,
Which mortals can afford us when they please.

ANTONIO.

Of all the Gods, ascribe it but to Fortune,
And I assent: her choice is ever blind.

TASSO.

And Justice too a veiling bandage wears
To keep each false illusion from her eyes.

ANTONIO.

'Tis fair the fortunate should flatter Fortune!

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And e'en ascribe to her — a hundred eyes
For her good service, choice, and potent care: —
Call her Minerva, call her what they will,
They deem her gracious gift a recompense —
A dress of chance, an ornament deserv'd.

TASSO.

There is no need to be more clear. Enough!
I now see deeply in thy heart, and know
Thee for the whole of life. O would that so
My princess knew thee too! Forbear to waste
The arrows of thine eyes, and of thy tongue!
For all in vain thou striv'st to gain the wreath,
The never-fading wreath, upon my brow.
With generosity surmount thine envy,
Thou then, perhaps, mayst dare contend for it.
I deem it hallow'd, yea! the highest good;
Yet shew to me the man who hath attain'd
What I but aim at, and the hero shew
Of whom the chronicles do only speak;
The poet place before me, who may risk
With Homer and with Virgil to compare

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Himself: nay, more, but shew to me the man,
Who, threefold, doth deserve this recompense;
Who three times, too, more bashfully than me
This beauteous crown would wear; thou then would'st see
Me 'fore the goddess, that conferr'd it, kneel:
Nor would I rise until this ornament,
From mine remov'd, on his high brow were plac'd.

ANTONIO.

Thou dost till that time wear it worthily.

TASSO.

I will not shrink from having my deserts,
Weigh'd in th' impartial balance, but I have
Not yet deserv'd the wrinkled sneer of scorn.
The wreath of which my prince hath deem'd me worthy,
And which my princess' hand hath woven for me,
No one shall dare thus spitefully to doubt.

ANTONIO.

To me this haughty tone, this hasty warmth,
Becomes thee not, and is not fitting here.

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TASSO.

What thou allow'st thyself becomes me too.
And is then truth entirely banish'd hence?
What! in the palace is free thought enchain'd?
Must here a noble mind oppression bear?
Methinks sublimity is here in place,
The soul's sublimity, and dares it not,
When near the mighty ones of earth, rejoice?
It dares, and shall do so. We only now
Through our ancestral rank the prince approach;
Why not through faculties, which Nature hath
Not shower'd on all, just as to all a line
Of mighty ancestors she could not give.
Here littleness alone should be disturb'd,
And envy, ever to its shame display'd;
Just as no spider's unbecoming web
Upon these polish'd marble walls should hang.

ANTONIO.

My right to hold thee in contempt, thyself
Thou show'st! will then the hasty boy by force

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The man's full confidence and friendship seize?
Art thou, although unmannerly, yet good?

TASSO.

Much rather what thou nam'st unmannerly,
Than be what I must ever call ignoble.

ANTONIO.

Thou art yet young enough for discipline
To guide thy footstep in a better path.

TASSO.

Not young enough to bow before an idôl,
But old enough to strike down scorn, with scorn!

ANTONIO.

Yes! where the play of lips and chords decide,
Thou may'st as conqu'ror and as hero march.

TASSO.

'T were vainly insolent to vaunt mine arm
That nought hath done, and yet I trust to it.

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ANTONIO.

Thou trustest to forbearance, which hath spoil'd thee
In thy young destiny's licentious course.

TASSO.

I feel that I am grown indeed, and yet
It would have been my farthest wish with thee,
With thee, the venture-game of arms to try:
But still thou addest fuel to the fire;
My very blood is boiling, and the lust
Of vengeance seeths and foams within my breast.
Art thou the man thou vaunt'st thyself, then stand.

ANTONIO.

Thou know'st as little who as where thou art.

TASSO.

No sanctuary exhorts to bear contempt.
'Tis thou that dost unhallow and profane
This spot; not I, who confidence, respect,
And love, the fairest offers brought to thee.

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Thy spirit sullies this fair paradise,
Thy scornful words this stainless hall; and not
The swelling feelings of my breast, resolv'd
Not e'en a tittle of a speck to bear.

ANTONIO.

How vast a soul within how poor a breast!

TASSO.

There still is room to give the bosom air.

ANTONIO.

With words the low-born give the bosom air.

TASSO.

If thou art gentle-born as I, then draw.

ANTONIO.

That am I well, but yet know where I am.

TASSO.

Then come away to where our swords avail.

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ANTONIO.

Where thou ought'st not to ask, I follow not.

TASSO.

To cowardice such obstacle is welcome.

ANTONIO.

Yet cowardice but threatens where 'tis sure.

TASSO.

With joy can I this base defence refuse.

ANTONIO.

But low'r thyself, thou can'st not low'r the place.

TASSO.

May it forgive me my prolonged endurance. [*He draws.*]
Or draw, or follow, if eternally
I must not, as I hate thee, scorn thee too.

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SCENE IV.

ENTER ALPHONSO.

ALPHONSO.

In what a strife I find ye both engag'd!

ANTONIO.

Thou dost behold me, prince, thus calmly stand
Before one whom infuriate rage hath seiz'd.

TASSO.

I worship thee as e'en I would a God,
And thus thou tam'st me with one warning look.

ALPHONSO.

Recount, Antonio; Tasso, tell to me
How in my house this quarrel hath arisen?
How hath it seiz'd you both; and from the course
Of manners, and the laws of prudent men
Hurl'd you so giddily? I am astounded.

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TASSO.

Thou dost not know us both — I feel it well:
This man, renown'd as clever and refin'd,
Hath like to some unlettered, untrain'd boor,
With rudest insult borne himself towards me;
In confidence I came; he hurl'd me back;
With constant love I press'd myself upon him —
And bitter, bitt'rer still he rested not
Until the purest drop of blood within
He turn'd to gall. Forgive! that thou hast found
Me all infuriate here. But I derive
My guiltiness from this man's guilt alone.
He violently fann'd the flame, which since
Hath seiz'd on me, and injur'd both of us.

ANTONIO.

The poet's flight hath hurried him away!
Thou first, O prince, address'd thyself to me,
And my tale ask'd: may I be now allow'd
After this hasty orator to speak?

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TASSO.

Oh! yes, recount, recount, from word to word,
And cans't thou to our judge each syllable
And gesture represent, then dare to do it!
Disgrace thyself a second time; against
Thyself thus testify, and I will then
No heaving breath nor beating pulse deny.

ANTONIO.

If thou hast e'en yet more to say, then speak;
If not, be still, and interrupt me not.
Whether 'twas I, my prince, or this hot head
That first the strife begun — whoe'er it be
That's in the wrong — is an extended question,
Which may at first well rest within itself.

TASSO.

How so? methinks, 'tis first the question, which
Of us be in the wrong, or in the right.

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ANTONIO.

Not quite as the unsubjugated mind
May think.

ALPHONSO.

Antonio!

ANTONIO.

My noble lord,
Thy look I honour, yet let him be still;
When I have spoken, he may farther plead;
'Tis thou that must decide. I only say,
With him I cannot reckon, nor myself
Can I excuse, or him accuse, nor e'en
Offer to give him satisfaction now.
For as he stands, he is not free to act.
Since over him there hangs a penalty
Thy favour can, at most, but mitigate;
For he hath challeng'd and provok'd me here,
And scarce 'fore thee his naked sword conceal'd.
And had'st thou not, my lord, come in between,

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Then I, forgetful of my duty too,
Before thee should have stood in equal fault.

ALPHONSO TO TASSO.

Thou hast not acted well.

TASSO.

My own heart speaks
Me free, my lord, as doubtless thine will too.
'Tis true, that I provok'd, and challeng'd, — yea,
Did draw. And yet how mischievous his tongue
With well-selected phrases injur'd me,
How sharp and quick his tooth this sifting poison
Instill'd into my blood, how more and more
My fever he inflam'd — thou think'st it not!
He kept me calm and chillingly aloof,
And goaded me beyond endurance. Oh!
Thou know'st him not — nor wilt thou ever know him!
I warmly offer'd him the fairest friendship,
And at his feet he threw my gift away:
Had then my soul not felt the glow of wrath,
It would have been eternally unworthy

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Of thy fair grace and service. If the law
I have forgotten and this place — forgive!
For on no spot of earth dare I be vile,
Debasement on no spot of earth endure:
But if this heart, where'er it chance to be,
Is wanting to itself and thee, then strike!
And let me ne'er behold thine eye again.

ANTONIO.

How lightly holds the youth his heavy crimes,
Shaking his faults away, as from a robe
The dust! — 'T were wonder-worthy; — if the pow'r
Of magic poesy were yet unknown,
Which doth with all that is impossible
So gladly play her game. I almost doubt
That thou, my prince, or yet thy ministers,
Will deem this deed so insignificant;
For majesty extends its fence to all,
Who do, as though it were a Godhead, it
And its unsullied neighbourhood approach:
For there, as at the altar's pedestal,
Upon the threshold is each passion tam'd.

TAYLOR INST. OXFORD

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There gleams no sword, there falls no taunting word,
There e'en th'insulted dares not ask revenge.
The field remains an open space enough
For rage and unforgivingness; and there
No coward will provoke, no man will fly.
These walls thy fathers have in surety bas'd —
Their dignity enclos'd a sanctuary;
And this calm rest with earnestness and wisdom
They kept by punishment inviolate;
A prison, exile, death o'ertook the guilty.
Of persons there was no respect; nor then
Did mercy hold the arm of justice back,
The boldest of offenders felt alarm:
Now after this long beauteous rest we see,
E'en in the realm of manners, rage uncouth
In dizziness return. My lord, decide,
And punish him! for in the narrow bounds
Of duty, who could dare abide, unless
Protected by his prince's law and pow'r!

ALPHONSO.

My feelings suffer me to be impartial,

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More than ye both have said, or can imagine.
Yet each would better have fulfilled his duty,
Were it not mine to issue forth this sentence;
For nearly here are right and wrong allied.
And if Antonio hath offended thee,
He must, in any circumstances, give
The satisfaction, such as thou may'st ask:
I wish ye would appoint me arbiter.
Meanwhile thy fault condemns thee to become
A captive, Tasso. And as I forgive,
For thy sake too I mitigate the law.
Now, Tasso, leave us! To thy room retire,
And in self-guarded solitude remain.

TASSO.

Is this then all thy righteous sentence, prince?

ANTONIO.

Dost thou not find a father's mercy there?

TASSO TO ANTONIO.

I will not e'en exchange one word with thee.

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TO ALPHONSO.

My prince, thy serious word condemns me, then,
A freeman, to captivity. So be
It, since thou deem'st it right. Thy hallow'd word
Revering, I do bid my heart be still.
Scarce can I recognise myself, or thee,
Or this fair spot, amid these changes; yet
Full well I know Antonio; — I obey!
Although I yet have many things to say,
And ought to say them too. My lip is mute.
Was it a crime? at least it seems that I
Am treated as a criminal. And what
My heart will out, I am a captive too.

ALPHONSO.

Thou view'st it much more seriously than I.

TASSO.

It is to me still inconceivable;
Not inconceivable, for I'm no child:
I almost see, I might have thought it too.

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A clearness doth at once gleam in on me,
Yet momentarily excludes itself:
I hear the judgment only, and submit.
These are e'en now too many useless words!
From this time he accustom'd to obey:
All-pow'rless! thou forgottest where thou stood'st;
The hall of Gods appear'd on level earth:
This hasty accident o'erwhelms thee now:
Gladly obey, for it becomes a man
To combat difficulties willingly.
First take the sword, thou gavest me when erst
I follow'd the Lord Cardinal to France;
'T was worn, though not with glory, not with shame;
Nor hath this day disgrac'd it. Of this gift
I dispossess myself with sadden'd heart.

ALPHONSO.

Thou feelest not my partiality.

TASSO.

My lot is to obey, and not to think!
From me, alas! harsh destiny demands

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The resignation of a noble gift.
A captive's brow this chaplet ill becomes;
I take this ornament away myself,
Which seem'd for an eternity mine own.
The fortune thus bestowed was premature,
And now as if I'd vaunted it, alas!
'Tis prematurely wrested from my grasp.
Thou tak'st thyself, what no one else could take,
And what no God can give a second time.
We men are wonderfully prov'd and tried;
We could not bear it all had Nature not
An elasticity bestow'd on us.
Necessity instructs us how to play,
Like prodigals, with things of countless value:
We open willingly our hands, that thus
A good may irrecov'rably escape.
With this soft kiss let mingling tears combine,
Devoting thee to perishableness!
This tender sign of weakness is allow'd.
Who would not weep, when immortality
Itself is subject to destruction's pow'r?
To this my sword attach thyself; (alas!

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It earn'd thee not;) and, 'twin'd around it, rest,
As on a hero's bier, thus on the grave
Of all my happiness, and all my hope!
I yield them up obedient at thy feet.
For who is armed well, if thou art angry?
And who adorn'd, whom thou, my lord, mistakest?
I go a captive, and await your justice.

(At the prince's beck a page takes away the sword and the garland.)

SCENE V.

ENTER ANTONIO.

ANTONIO.

Where roves the boy? his destiny and worth
With what imagin'd colours doth he paint?
'Tis thus confin'd and inexperienc'd youth
Pre-eminently deems itself elect,
Claiming a charter'd privilege in all.
He feels himself chastis'd — but chastisement
Profits the boy, that afterwards the man
May thank us.

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ALPHONSO.

He is, I only fear, chastis'd too much.

ANTONIO.

Be lenient, prince; and set him free again,
And let the sword decide our difference.

ALPHONSO.

If the world's voice so will it, let it be.
Yet tell me how thou didst excite his ire?

ANTONIO.

I scarce can tell thee how it did befall;
I may have hurt his feelings as a man,
Though I did nothing to offend his honor;
Nor from his lip, e'en in his greatest rage,
Did any indecorous word escape.

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ALPHONSO.

So seem'd to me your strife; and what thou sayest
Doth more and more confirm my first impression;
When men have quarrell'd, we are right in judging
The wisest as the most in wrong. 'Tis not
For thee to enter into strife with him;
To guide and aid him would become thee better,
Yet there is time enough; no case is here
To force a quarrel. I would fain enjoy
His presence, while there lasts a show of concord;
Then bring back peace, to thee an easy task:
But first let Leonora Sanvitale
Attempt to sooth him with her gentle lip:
'T will then be thine to seek him, and proclaim him
In my name free; and by thy noble bearing
Obtain his confidence. Accomplish this
Quick as thou canst by hailing him thy friend.
Before we go, I'll know that peace is made;
If thou but hast the will, the thing is easy.
'Twere better to remain another hour,
And let the women afterwards complete
What thou beginnest; and at our return

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All trace of this impression will be lost.
It seems thou wilt not fall into disuse!
Thou scarce hast finish'd one affair, when thou
Returnest to employ thyself anew:
I hope this business may succeed as well.

ANTONIO.

I am asham'd, and in thy words perceive
My fault as in the brightest glass displayed!
'Tis easy to obey a noble prince
Who can dispense conviction with command.

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ACT III.

SCENE I.

PRINCESS. — (*Alone.*)

Where bides Eleonora? more and more,
Each moment, painful sorrow agitates
My inmost heart. Scarce know I what's befall'n,
And which of them is guilty scarce I know.
Oh! would that she were come! I would not yet
Or with my brother or Antonio speak;
Before I am compos'd, before I hear
How stands the matter now, and how't will end.

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SCENE II.

PRINCESS. — LEONORA.

PRINCESS.

What bring'st thou, Leonora? answer me:
How stands it with our friends? say, what's befall'n?

LEONORA.

More than we knew I've not discover'd yet.
They wrangl'd hard together; Tasso drew;
Thy brother separated them; but yet
It seems t'was Tasso that begun the strife.
Antonio still is free, and parleys with
His prince; while Tasso, on the contrary,
Stays banish'd in his chamber, and alone.

PRINCESS.

Antonio surely irritated him, —
Offended, cold and strange, his high-tun'd mind.

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LEONORA.

That too is my opinion; for when first
He came, a cloud was hanging on his brow.

PRINCESS.

Ah! that we still so grievously refuse
To yield unto the bosom's pure calm hint!
All softly speaks a God within our breast,
All softly, yet perceptibly points out
Both what we should embrace, and what avoid.
This very morn Antonio seem'd to me
More rugged and reserv'd than heretofore.
When near him Tasso plac'd himself, my soul
Gave warning to me. Mark th' external signs
Of both of them, the countenance, the tone,
The gaze, the step, 'tis all to all oppos'd:
No friendly feeling e'er can they exchange.
And yet Hope quickly talk'd me over, she,
The fair seductress. Both are rational,
Are noble, educated, and thy friends;
And what more certain bond than of the good?

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I urg'd the youth, he gave himself entire;
How fair, how warm he gave himself to me!
O had I but address'd Antonio then!
I linger'd; yet the time was only short,
And I was shy in my first words to urge
Him pressingly to countenance the youth;
Trusting to manners, and to courtesy,
The usage of the world, which lays itself
So smoothly oft 'twixt foes: I feared not
From such a man, so much approv'd and tried,
The sallies of impetuous youth. 'Tis over,
The evil, which stood far from me, is near:
O give me counsel! what is to be done?

LEONORA.

How difficult it is to counsel! that
Thy words proclaim thyself to feel. 'Tis here
No misconception 'twixt the like-attun'd!
That words, or, in necessity, e'en arms,
Might easily and happily repair.
Two men they are, and I have felt it long,
That thus are foes, because that of them both

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Dame Nature hath not form'd a single man.
But were they to their own advantage keen,
They would as warmest friends ally themselves;
They would for one man stand, and pass through life
With pow'r, with pleasure, and with happiness.
So hop'd I once: ah! now I see 'twas vain.
To day's rash quarrel, be it as it will,
May be appeas'd; yet that assures us not
For days to come, nor even for the morrow.
It would perhaps be best, methinks, for Tasso
To travel for a time from hence; he might
Direct his loit'ring steps to Rome or Florence,
Where I within a few short weeks should meet him,
And have perhaps an opportunity
Of working on his feelings as a friend.
And thou, the meanwhile, may'st persuade Antonio,
Who hath become so strange to us, to seek
A closer concert with thy friends and thee;
Thus friendly Time, that yields so much, may deign
To grant us what seems now impossible.

PRINCESS.

Thou wilt, my friend, then place thyself in joy,
While I must be depriv'd: is that quite fair?

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LEONORA.

For thou wilt only be depriv'd of what
Thou canst not reap the full enjoyment now.

PRINCESS.

Shall I so all unmov'd condemn a friend
To banishment?

LEONORA.

Thou still retainest whom
Thou but in semblance banishest.

PRINCESS.

My brother
Will ne'er consent to lose him.

LEONORA.

When he sees
The thing as we do, he will quickly yield.

PRINCESS.

One's self to punish in a friend is hard.

LEONORA.

Yet in thyself thou rescuest thy friend.

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PRINCESS.

I cannot answer yes; that it be done.

LEONORA.

Then mark the issue of a weightier evil.

PRINCESS.

Thou giv'st me pain, and know'st not if there be
The slightest use in it.

LEONORA.

'Tis well; we soon
Shall have it settled who was in the wrong.

PRINCESS.

Well, if it must be so, then speak no more.

LEONORA.

They who resolve themselves can conquer grief.

PRINCESS.

Yet I am not resolved; but let it be,
If he doth not absent himself too long.

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And let us watch his interest, Leonora,
That for the future he may feel no want;
And that the duke may grant him willingly
His pension and appointments when abroad.
Speak to Antonio;—he hath pow'r to soothe
My brother's anger, and will not oppress
Our friend, nor us, in pitiful revenge.

LEONORA.

A word from thee would be of more avail.

PRINCESS.

My friend, thou know'st I never had the art,
As my dear sister of Urbino hath,
Of asking for myself or for my friends.
I fain would live in stillness for myself,
And from my brother take in thankfulness
Whate'er he can or will bestow on me.
What numberless reproaches have I made
Myself thereon in times gone by! but now
Have ceas'd. How oft some scolding friend hath said
Thou art disinterested, it is most true:

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And that is good; — so much so yet thou art,
That e'en the exigencies of a friend
Thou ne'er canst learn to feel: I let it pass,
And am compell'd to bear this just reproach.
So much the more I am rejoic'd that now
I can in deeds be useful to my friend;
My mother's heritage falls in to me,
And gladly will I help to foster him.

LEONORA.

I too, my princess, find that I possess
The pow'r to shew myself his real friend.
He is no good economist, and I
Will skilfully assist him when in want.

PRINCESS.

Well, take him then: if I must be deprived,
To thee of all the world he's envied least!
I see it well, it will be better so.
Must I again this sorrow praise as good,
And wholesome? *that* hath ever been my fate
From youth, — I am accustom'd to it now.

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The loss of happiness is only half,
Where'er we could not count on its possession.

LEONORA.

I hope to see thee soon as richly happy
As thou deservest!

PRINCESS.

Leonora, happy!
Say, who is happy? yet my brother, true,
I might so name, for his unbounded soul,
With feelings ever equal bears his fate;
But what he merits, he hath never gain'd.
Say, is my sister of Urbino happy?
That beauteous woman, that exalted heart!
She bears no children to her younger lord;
He values her, and would not have her suffer,
Yet still no pleasure dwells within their house.
Our mother, what avail'd her cleverness?
The ken of ev'ry art? her mighty mind?
Could it protect her from strange errors wild?
They took us from her, and she 's dead; but yet

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Hath not bequeath'd the comfort to her children
Of thinking that she died at peace with Heav'n.

LEONORA.

Remark not that which fails in ev'ry one,—
Consider rather what remains to them,
And what remains to thee!

PRINCESS.

Remains to me?
Why, patience, Leonora! from my youth
I 've us'd it; when my kinsmen and my friends
At festival and sport enjoy'd themselves,
In my lone chamber sickness held me fast;
And in society of many a woe
I early learnt forbearance. One delight
There was, to soothe me in my solitude,—
The transport of sweet song; I entertain'd
Me with myself; my longing and my grief
My ev'ry wish with softest tones I rock'd.
Then sorrow oft became a joy; and that
Which in itself was sad, a harmony.

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This pleasure was not long accorded me;
This the physician quickly tore away;
Mute by his orders, I was doom'd to live
In sufferance, and forego my consolation.

LEONORA.

Yet many friends attach'd themselves to thee,
And now thou art in health and joyous life.

PRINCESS.

I am in health; that is, I am not sick:
And many friends I have, whose faithfulness
Renders me happy. Once I had a friend —

LEONORA.

Thou hast him still.

PRINCESS.

To lose him but too soon.
The moment that I saw him first, was not
Without importance. Scarce recover'd then
From many an anguish, grief and sickness scarce

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Were for the first time flown: I shily look'd
On life again, rejoicing in the day,
And in my kinsmen; boldly I imbib'd
The purest balsam of the sweetest hope.
I dar'd in onward course more widely range
And gaze on life, while friendly images
Were wont to meet me from afar. 'Twas then,
Eleonora, that my sister plac'd
This youth before me; in her hand he came;
And then, I will confess to thee, my soul
Encompass'd him to hold eternally.

LEONORA.

My princess, let it not repent thee now:
To know that which is noble is a gain
Which never can be snatch'd away from us.

PRINCESS.

The fair, the excellent, is to be fear'd,
Just as a flame, which is of noblest use
So long as it but burns upon the hearth,
So long as from a torch it shines on us:

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How lovely! who may dare dispense with it?
But if it works its way on us unmark'd,
How woful can it make us! leave me now,
I am loquacious; and 'twere better e'en
From thee to hide how weak I am and sick.

LEONORA.

The sickness of the soul dissolves itself
Most easily in plaints and confidence.

PRINCESS.

Then I shall soon be cur'd, if confidence
Can cure; I have it all entire for thee.
Alas! my friend, 'tis true, I am resolv'd;
Let him then go! and yet I feel e'en now
The long-expanded grief of those sad days,
When I must do without what pleas'd me so.
The dream-dissolving sun no more will chase
His beauteous image from mine eyes away:
The hope of seeing him no longer fills
The scarce awaken'd soul with gay desire:
My early look upon our garden down

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In vain doth seek him in the dewy shade.
How fairly satisfied hath been the wish
With him to pass each calm and beauteous eve!
How by acquaintance the desire increas'd
To know and understand each other more;
The soul, each day, more beauteously attun'd
Itself to ever purer harmonies.
But what a twilight falls before me now!
The splendour of the sun, the joyous sense
Of lofty day, the thousand-colour'd world's
Ray-rich vicinity are waste and deep
Within the cloud enclos'd, that wraps me round.
Each day was formerly a life to me;
Sorrow was mute, Foreboding's self was dumb;
Embark'd in happiness, the current bore us
Upon its bounding wave without an oar.
But now the horrors of futurity
Pervade, in sad vicinity, my breast.

LEONORA.

The future gives thee back thy friend again,
And brings to thee new happiness and joy.

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PRINCESS.

What I possess, I only fain would keep;
Though change amuses, yet it profits not;
With youthful longing I have never striv'd
To snatch from out the strange world's lottery
For my requiring inexperienc'd heart
An accidental object. No! I felt
I must revere him, therefore 'twas I lov'd him;
And I must love him, for with him my life
Became a life such as I ne'er had known.
At first I said, absent thyself from him:
I went and went, yet only nearer came,—
So dearly lur'd, so harshly punish'd now!
A pure and real good before me sinks;
An angry spirit to my longing yields
Instead of glee and joy, commingled griefs.

LEONORA.

If friendly words cannot console thee now,
Yet will the fair world's, and all-fav'ring Time's
Calm pow'r, unmark'd, revivify thy soul.

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PRINCESS.

The world indeed is fair! in whose expanse
So much of good is scatter'd here and there.
Ah! that it ever seems to be but one
Small step remov'd from us! and thus through life
Our anxious longing also, step by step,
Yea, even unto the very grave allures!
So seldom is it that mankind possess
E'en that which seem'd to be assur'd to them,
So seldom is it that they can retain
What e'en the lucky hand may once have grasp'd!
'Tis torn away, what once was giv'n to us,
We lose what erst with eagerness we seiz'd.
There is a happiness we know not of —
We know it well, yet cannot prize it too.

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SCENE III.

LEONORA. — (*Alone.*)

It pains me much, that fair and noble heart!
How sad the lot that to her greatness falls!
She loses — ah! — and thinkest thou to win?
Is it so needful that he be remov'd?
Mak'st thou it needful, that thyself alone
That heart and those bright talents may possess,
Which thou art sharing with another, sharing
Unequally? is 't honest so to act?
Art thou not rich enough? what fails thee still?
A spouse, a son, and beauty, wealth, and rank;
These hast thou all; and wilt thou yet have him
To add unto this all? Say, lov'st thou him?
Why is it else that thus thou canst no more
Exist without him? *that* thou dar'st confess.
How thrilling is it at one's self to gaze
In his fair spirit's mirror! and is not

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Good fortune doubly great when his lay lifts
Us high, as though upon the clouds of heav'n?
Thou hast not only that which many wish,
But what thou hast all know and recognise:
Thy country names thee, yea, doth gaze on thee,
And that is fortune's highest pinnacle.
Is Laura, then, alone the name which may
From ev'ry soft and tender lip resound?
And had then Petrarch, too, alone the right
His lov'd and unknown fair to deify?
Where is the man that with my friend may risk
To be compar'd? As now the world applauds him
Posterity will name him with like honor.
How noble is it 'mid the beams of life
To have him at one's side! and thus with him
Approach futurity with lightsome step!
Thus time and age can have no influence
On thee, nor yet the voice of saucy fame,
Which here and there disturbs the waves of praise;
For transient things his lay will make eternal.
Thou wilt be fair and happy still, when long
The whirlpool of events hath borne thee down.

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Have him thou must, and takest nought from her;
Her inclination tow'rds this dearest man
Is unto all her other passions like:
They beam, as to the pilgrim beams the moon,
All sparingly upon the path of night:
They do not warm; and pour no pleasure round,
No rays of lifeful joy: she will rejoice,
If she but know him happy when afar,
As, when she saw him daily, she rejoic'd.
I will no longer hold in banishment
Myself and Tasso from Ferrara's court:
I will return, and bring him here again.
Thus shall it be! — here comes the rugged friend.
We'll see if we can tame his spirit now.

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SCENE IV.

LEONORA. — ANTONIO.

LEONORA.

Thou bring'st us war instead of peace; it seems
As if thou camest from a camp or fight
Where force predominates and strength decides,
And not from Rome, where solemn dignity,
With benediction lifts the hand, and sees
A prostrate world all willingly obey.

ANTONIO.

I must endure the blame, my beauteous friend,
Though the apology lies near at hand.
'Tis dang'rous, when we are oblig'd too long
To shew ourselves in calm and temperate colours.
The evil genius at our side is lurking,
And will, too, e'en by force, from time to time,
A victim have. Alas! I have this time
Appeas'd his anger at my friend's expense.

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LEONORA.

Thou hast so long for strangers toil'd thyself,
And after their thoughts regulated thine;
Now that thou seest thy friends again, thou dost
Mistake them, and, as with a stranger, rekon.

ANTONIO.

'Tis there, my lovely friend, the danger lies!
For when with strangers, we collect ourselves;
We make remarks, and in their favour seek
Our aim, that they may be at length of use.
With friends we let ourselves all freely go,
We rest upon their love and we allow
Ourselves a humour; passion unrestrain'd
Doth work, and thus at first we injure those
Whom we may love with warmest tenderness.

LEONORA.

In this dispassionate consideration
I gladly find thee quite thyself again.

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ANTONIO.

Yet it annoys me, I must e'en confess,
That I so wholly lost myself to-day:
But yet avow, that when an active man,
With heated brow from bitter toil returns,
And late at eve, in his selected shade,
Intends for new fatigues to rest himself,
But finds that by some idler his retreat
Is far and wide possess'd, shall he not find
Some human feeling rise within his breast?

LEONORA.

If he is truly human, he will share,
In joy, his leafy canopy with one
Who sweetens his repose, and lightens too
His toil by conversation's loveliest tones.
The tree is wide, my friend, that gives the shade,
And no one needs another to supplant!

ANTONIO.

We will not, Leonora, to and fro

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Thus with a simile amuse ourselves;
For many things there are in this low world,
Which oft we are compell'd to share with others;
There is a treasure which we yield alone
Unto the high-deserving; but there is
Another still, of which we never yield
Unto the most deserving with good-will:
If after these two treasures thou dost ask,
They are the laurel, and fair woman's love.

LEONORA.

Hath yonder wreath upon our stripling's brow
The serious man offended? Could'st thou find
For all his toil and beauteous poesy
A more retir'd and modest recompense?
For sure a merit that is all unearthly,
That floats in air, and is in tones alone
And lightest images around our soul
Enchantingly entwin'd, should be with forms
And lovely tokens only recompens'd:
And as he scarcely deigns to touch the earth,
So doth this high reward scarce touch his brow!

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A dry, unfruitful twig is the reward,
The barren and the gainless inclination
Of those, who honour him, presents; and thus
Discharges in the lightest way their debt.
Thou dost not to the pictur'd martyr grudge
The golden radiance round his hairless head;
And where the laurel-wreath appears to thee,
'Tis more a sign of sorrow than of joy!

ANTONIO.

Perhaps your lovely lips would teach me now
The world's unfruitful vanity to scorn.

LEONORA.

To prize each good according to its worth
I need not teach thee; yet it would appear,
From time to time, the wise man would require,
Just as another, that the goods he hath
Be in their real light display'd to him.
Thou noblest man, thou wilt not make a claim
After an airy phantom of renown.
The services by which thou bind'st thy prince,

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By which thy num'rous friends are bound to thee,
Are working, and are living, — thus must be
As real, and as living, their reward.
Thy laurel is the princely confidence,
Which, on thy shoulders borne sublime and light,
Reposes as a fresh unfading burden:
Reliance universal is thy fame.

ANTONIO.

But of the favour of the fair thou nought
Hast said; — wilt thou paint this superfluous?

LEONORA.

'Tis as one takes it. Thou would'st feel no want,
And it were lighter too, wert thou depriv'd,
Than it would be for yonder worthy man
For think'st thou that a woman would succeed,
Who after her own fashion car'd for thee,
And undertook for thee to task herself?
Order and certainty with thee are all,
Thou carest for thyself as for another;
Thou hast what we would give to thee. But he

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Employs us in our own department; he
Requires a thousand trifles, to supply
Which woman gladly occupies herself.
The finest linen, and a silken vest
Somewhat embroider'd, doth he gladly wear.
He gladly sees himself array'd — nay more,
Ignoble stuff that but befits the knave
He will not on his person bear, for all
Must be to him fine, beauteous, noble, good.
And yet he hath no aptness to procure
All this himself; nor if he has it, e'en
To keep it long; he ever feels the want
Of carefulness and money; now he leaves
A garment here, now there: he ne'er returns
From an excursion that he hath not lost
The third of his effects: and then perhaps
His servant robs him: thus, Antonio,
We have for him the whole year round to care.

ANTONIO.

This care doth make him dearer and more dear.
Oh! happy youth, to whom his failings are

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As virtues counted, and to whom as man
'Tis prettily allow'd to play the boy,
Who dares his own enchanting weakness boast!
Thou would'st, I know, forgive me, beauteous friend,
If I were e'en a little bitter here.
Thou say'st not all, and say'st not what he dares,
And that he shrewder is than what we think.
He vaunts himself of two flames! binds the knots
And looses them again, and thus succeeds
By such contrivances such hearts to win.
Say, is it credible?

LEONORA.

Good! there's the proof
It is but friendship that inspires us both.
But if we even love for love exchang'd
Should we not justly recompense that heart
Which, in oblivion of itself, but lives
In lovely dreams conceded to its friends?

ANTONIO.

Yes! only spoil him ever more and more,

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And let his selfishness avail as love.
Affront your friends, who with a soul sincere
To ye devote themselves; a tribute yield
All self-impos'd unto the proud; destroy
The circle fair of social confidence!

LEONORA.

Yet we are not so partial as thou think'st;
In many cases we exhort our friend;
We wish to form him, that he may enjoy
Himself the more and yield himself the more
To be enjoy'd by others. Yet what is
To blame in him is not conceal'd from us.

ANTONIO.

And yet ye praise too much what is to blame.
I've known him long, he is so quick to know,
And is too haughty to conceal himself.
'Tis now he sinks within himself, as though
The world were in his bosom, and as if
His world were quite enough for him, while all
Around him disappears. He lets it go,

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Thrusts it away, and rests within himself;
Then sometimes, as a spark all-unobserv'd
Kindles the mine, or be it joy, or pain,
Anger or whim, he hastily breaks out.
Then will he seize on all, and all possess,
Then must he do whate'er his fancy wills;
And in one moment must originate
What lengthen'd years should tranquilly prepare;
And in a moment, too, see plan'd away
What toil could scarce in centuries undo.
He from himself th' impossible demands,
That he may dare from others ask it too.
The last extremes of all things would his mind
Connect together; which can scarce succeed
To one among a million of mankind,
And he is not the man; he falls at last,
Nothing improv'd, into himself again.

LEONORA.

He harms not others, but annoys himself.

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ANTONIO.

And yet he injures others but too much.
Can'st thou deny the passion, which is wont
To seize him quickly, which he e'en would dare
Upon the prince, or e'en the princess' self,
On whomsoe'er it chanc'd, profanely vent?
'Tis true but for a moment—yet, enough—
The moment comes too soon again: he checks
His lips as little as the fount of thought.

LEONORA.

I think perhaps if he from hence awhile
Were to withdraw himself, it would no doubt
For him be useful, and for others too.

ANTONIO.

Perhaps—perhaps, too, not. Yet 'tis not now
The time to think thereon. For I will not
Upon my shoulders lay the fault. It might
Appear as if 'twas I that drove him forth—
And I,—I drive him not. For with my will

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He calmly may remain in this our court.
And if he will be reconcil'd with me,
And if he can but follow my advice,
Then may we live together tranquilly.

LEONORA.

Thou hopest now to work upon a mind,
Which lately seem'd to thee beyond redemption.

ANTONIO.

We always hope, and 'tis far better too
In ev'ry thing to hope than to despair:
For who can count upon contingencies?
He is of service to our prince, and must
Remain;—and if we try in vain to mould him,
He's not the only one with whom we bear.

LEONORA.

I deem'd thee not so free from prejudice
And passion;—thou hast soon regained composure.

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ANTONIO.

Age hath this one advantage, that altho'
It may perchance have err'd, at least it soon
Repairs its wrong. At first 'twas thou that didst
Essay to reconcile thy friend with me.
'Tis now my turn to sue. Do what thou can'st
That he may soon regain his self-possession,
And all may be on equal terms again.
I will myself repair to him as soon
As I shall learn from thee he is appeased,
As soon as thou art certain that my presence
Will not encrease the evil. What thou dost;
That do within this very hour: Alphonso
Retracks his steps this evening to the city,
And I attend him. So meanwhile, farewell.

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SCENE V.

LEONORA. — (*Alone.*)

For this time, worthy friend, we are not one;
For my advantage goes not hand in hand
With thine to-day. But ho! I must employ
This time in winning Tasso. Onwards, on.

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ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A Chamber.

TASSO. — (*Alone.*)

ART thou awaken'd from a dream, and hath
That fair illusion left thee all at once?
Hath after such a day of boundless joy
A sleep oppress'd thee — doth it torture now
And hold thy soul in fetters? Yes, 'tis true
Thou art awake, and dream'st; but where are they,
Those hours that play'd with garlands 'round thy brow?
The days when with a longing unrestrain'd
Thy soul was wont to pierce th' expanded heav'n?
And yet thou livest, and art struggling still
To feel thyself; thou feelest — knowing not
Whether thou art alive or no. The guilt,
Say, is it mine, or is 't another's guilt,

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That I am here confin'd as culpable?
Have I then sinn'd, that I must suffer so?
Or is not rather my whole fault a merit?
I look'd on him, and hurried by good-will
And by a hope-deluded heart conceived,
That he who bore a mortal image must
Be man. I flew to him with open arms,
But found a lock and bars, no bosom there.
Oh! then I had so cleverly contrived
How I might best receive the man, whom I
Suspected from the earliest time! — But yet
Whate'er may happen at the last, I shall
For ever cling unto the certainty. —
I've seen her! yes; — she stood before my view!
She spake to me, and I have heard her voice!
Her look, her tone, her words most lovely sense
Eternally are mine; nor time, nor fate,
Nor fortune's wild caprice can rob me of them:
And if my mind too quickly rais'd itself,
And all too quick I let my bosom's flame
Have air, which now alas! consumes myself,
Yet can I not repent, e'en if in life

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My destin'd fortune should be marr'd for ever.
To her I was devoted—follow'd gayly
The hint that to destruction summon'd me.
Be it! since I have shown that I deserv'd
The confidence that still revives me, yea!
Revives me e'en in this sad hour, which opes
To me by force the gloomy gates of woe
Interminable. Yes 'tis o'er! The sun
Of fairest favour hath for ever set
On me; the prince hath his benign regard
Withdrawn from me, and coldly left me here
To stand forlorn upon this small dark path.
That execrable, double-dealing tribe,
The odious train of antiquated night,
Swarming before me shrieks around my head.
Oh! where, oh! where can I direct my steps,
To fly from that abhorrence buzzing sound,
And shun th' abyss that gapes so wide before me?

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SCENE II.

LEONORA. — TASSO.

LEONORA.

Say what hath happen'd, Tasso? whither hath
Thy zeal and thy unjust suspicion urg'd thee?
What hath befall'n? We all remain confus'd; —
Thy softness, and thy social qualities,
Thy rapid ken, thy well-pois'd understanding, —
Which makes thee give to every one his due, —
Thy equanimity, — which bears what soon
Is by the noble, never by the vain,
Acquir'd, a prudent government of tongue: —
My friend, I almost have mistaken thee.

TASSO.

Yes, but suppose that now the whole is lost!
And that a friend, whom once thou thoughtest rich,
Thou, all at once, hast found to be a beggar.

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Well, thou art right; I am no more myself;
And yet I am, as much as I was ever.
It seems a riddle, yet it is not one.
The tranquil moon, that pleases thee by night,
And with its beam resistlessly allures
Thine eyes, thy feelings, floats the live-long day
An insignificant and pallid cloud.
I am outdazzled by the glance of day:
Ye know me not — I know myself no more.

LEONORA.

I do not understand thy words, my friend,
As thou dost utter them. Explain thyself;
Say, hath this rugged man's offence so vex'd
And mortally offended thee, that thou
Mistak'st thyself and us? Confide in me.

TASSO.

It is not I that am offended; thou
Dost see me punish'd here, because I have
Offended; light and quick the sword can loose
The knots of many words; I am a captive:

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Thou scarce dost know, yet shrink not, gentle lady,
'Tis in a prison that thou meet'st thy friend.
Like froward boy the prince chastises me; —
I will not plead with him, 'tis not my right.

LEONORA.

Thou seem'st more mov'd than thou in justice shouldst be.

TASSO.

Think'st thou me then so weak, — so much a child, —
That such a trifle could disturb my peace?
It is not what is done annoys me so,
'Tis what it signifies that vexes me.
Let my detractors and my foes alone!
Unlimited and open is the field.

LEONORA.

Thou falsely dost suspect; too many far, —
Of that I am convinc'd; — Antonio, too
Is not thine enemy. — To-day's dispute —

TASSO.

I lay that quite aside, and only take

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Antonio as he was, and as he is.
His stiff unbending prudence chafes me so,
And that he ever will enact the master,
Instead of searching if the hearer's mind
Proceeds itself on proper tracks. Of much
He would instruct thee, that thyself thou feelest
Deeper and better, — and will hear no word
Thou would'st advance, — and yet mistakes thee ever.
To be mistaken by a haughty man,
Who, smiling, thinks beyond thy ken to see!
I am not yet so cautious nor so old,
To merely raise a patient counter-smile:
Early or late, — it could not hold together, —
We must have brok'n; the later too it were,
The worse it would have been. One lord alone
I recognise; the lord that fosters me,
Him I obey, but will no master else.
I will be free in thought and poesy,
The world in action straightens us enough.

LEONORA.

And yet how of he speaks in praise oft thee.

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TASSO.

Thou wouldest with forbearance say;—so shrewd,—
And that distracts me too,—he ever knows
To speak with such conditions, and so smooth;
So that his commendation is but blame;
For nought more deeply injures than the praise
Of his false lips.

LEONORA.

Thou should'st have heard, my friend,
How he but lately held discourse of thee,
And of the talents bounteous Nature's hand
Beyond her wont had granted thee. He felt
All that thou art, and hast,— and priz'd it too.

TASSO.

Rely on me, a selfish soul can ne'er
Escape from narrow envy's goading pang;
And such a man may easily forgive
Both wealth, and rank, and honour; for he thinks
All *that* he hath, or hath it when he will,—

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When he is steady, or when fortune smiles:
Yet that which Nature can alone concede,
And which to ev'ry toil and ev'ry strife
Is still unreachable, which neither gold
Nor perseverance, prudence, nor the sword
Can e'er extort, *that* will he ne'er forgive.
Doth he not grudge it me, whose rigid mind
The Muse's favour thinks to seize by force?
Who, when he hath the thoughts of many a bard
Woven together, deems himself a poet?
The prince's favour he more gladly yields,
(Which still he would confine upon himself,)
Than that rare talent which the heav'nly host
Upon the poor and orphan youth bestow'd

LEONORA.

Oh! would that thou could'st see as clear as I!
Thou speak'st in ignorance of his character.

TASSO.

And if I err, I err most willingly!
I think on him, as on my deadliest foe;

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And should be inconsolable, were I
Oblig'd to think of him indulgently.
'Tis foolish always to be just. It is
To ravage and destroy oneself. Are men
Tow'rds us so ever just! oh! no, oh! no!
Mankind require within their narrow breasts
The double sentiment of love and hate.
Is not the night as needful as the day?
And sleep as wakefulness! From henceforth I
Must deem him — object of my deepest hate;
And nought can ever tear away the joy
I strongly cherish, vilely and more vilely
To think of him.

LEONORA.

If thou wilt not, my friend,
Relax in this opinion, I scarce see
How thou can'st longer at the court remain.
Thou know'st his worth, and what it e'er must be.

TASSO.

I know too well, my kind and beauteous friend,
How long I have been deem'd superfluous here,

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LEONORA.

That thou art not, nor can'st thou ever be so!
Thou know'st full well how glad the prince and princess
Have ever been to live with thee; and if
Their sister of Urbino comes, she comes
As much for thine as for her kinsmen's sake;—
Of thee they all think well and equally,
And each without restriction trusts to thee.

TASSO.

Oh! Leonora, what a trust is that?
Say, hath he of his state a single word,
An earnest word, exchang'd with me? There came
An individual case, on which he e'en
While I was present with his sister spoke,
Advis'd with others, never question'd me.
'Twas ever then the cry, Antonio comes!
Antonio, we must write! Antonio, ask!

LEONORA.

Instead of thanking him, thou art resolv'd,

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To murmur: — while he gives thee boundless fredom —
He cannot proffer thee a greater honor.

TASSO.

He thinks me useless, and allows me rest.

LEONORA.

Thou art not useless, even shouldst thou rest. —
So long as thou wilt fondle strife and care,
As a beloved child, upon thy breast, —
(I oft have thought of it, and as I will
May think of it), on this enchanted soil,
Where fav'ring fortune seem'd to plant thee firm,
Thou canst not flourish. Dare I speak it out,
And counsel thee? Oh! Fly from hence away!

TASSO.

Thou sweet physician, do not spare the sick!
Reach him his medicine, nor reflect if it
Perchance be bitter. But consider only,
Is it a cure? My good, my prudent friend!
I see it clear myself; yes, all is past:

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Him I could well forgive, but he not me:
They've need of him, but not, alas! of me.
And he is wise, and I, alas! am not.
He is destroying me, — yet I nor can,
Nor will attempt a counter-work. My friends, —
They let it pass, or see it otherwise;
They scarce resist, yet ought to struggle hard.
Thou think'st I should away: I think it too;
So fare thee well! I must endure this too:
Ye will be sever'd from me; oh! may strength,
Enabling me to part from you be giv'n me.

LEONORA.

Things, which when view'd too near perplex the soul,
Display themselves more purely at a distance.
Perhaps thou wilt discover what a love
Surrounded thee, and what a treasure is
The true fidelity of friends, and how
The world cannot replace our nearest ties.
That we shall try! and yet I know the world
From earliest youth, how lightly it will leave us

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All-helpless and alone, and go its way
Like sun and moon and other deities.

LEONORA.

If thou wilt only list to me, my friend,
Thou never shalt repeat this sad experience.
Were I to counsel thee, thou first would'st go
To Florence; there a friend most faithfully
Will watch thy welfare. Yet be not alarmed;
'Tis I myself. I shortly travel thither
To meet my wedded lord; and nought for him
And me can I more pleasingly prepare,
Than if I introduce thee to our circle.
I add not one word more, thou know'st thyself
To what a noble prince thou wilt be near,
What glorious men and what enchanting dames
That lovely city nurseth in its bosom.
Thou 'rt silent? Oh! bethink thee well! resolve.

TASSO.

'Tis all alluring what thou tellest me,
And in accordance with my secret wish;

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And yet it is too new; I beg of thee
To let me think, — I soon shall have resolved.

LEONORA.

Then I shall go with fairest hope away
For thee, for us, and for this princely house.
Reflect; and if thou rightly dost reflect,
It will be hard to form a better plan.

TASSO.

Yet answer me again, my lovely friend;
How is the princess minded tow'rds me now?
Was she indignant with me? did she speak?
Say, did she blame me much? Pray, freely tell me.

LEONORA.

She knows thee; thus she found a quick excuse.

TASSO.

Have I her favour lost? Oh! flatter not.

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LEONORA.

Woman's regard is not thus play'd away.

TASSO.

Will she dismiss me gladly when I go?

LEONORA.

Yes; if it should conduce — to thy advantage.

TASSO.

And shall I not have lost the prince's favor?

LEONORA.

Thou may'st repose upon his nobleness.

TASSO.

And shall we leave the princess all allone?
Thou goest away; and though I am not much,
I know that yet I was a something to her.

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LEONORA.

An absent friend hath sweet companionship
With us, when e'er we know that he is happy:
And it succeeds, I see thee happy now;
Thou wilt not go in discontent from hence,
Antonio seeks thee by his lord's command.
He blames himself the bitterness, with which
He wounded thee. I pray thee, when he comes,
Receive him calmly and composedly.

TASSO.

I dare, in ev'ry sense, before him stand.

LEONORA.

And oh! may Heav'n allow me, worthy friend,
To open yet thine eyes before thou goest;
To shew that no one in thy father-land
Pursues, or hates, or e'en in secret taunts thee!
Thou surely errest, and as once thou didst
Compose for others, — now thou dost compose
An unimaginable web to vex

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Thyself. But I will use my utmost pow'r
To rend it wide asunder,—that uncurb'd
Thou mayst on life's refulgent path-way roam.
Farewell! I soon shall hope a happy word.

SCENE III.

TASSO. — (*Alone.*)

I must acknowledge—what? that no one hates—
No one pursues me; ev'ry artifice,
And ev'ry secret web, is spun and woven
In the still chambers of my brain alone!
I must, besides, avow that I am wrong!
And oft do wrong to many, who deserve
It not from me! and *that* I must avow,
When 'fore mine eyes the sun as clearly shows
My boundless right as their malicious wrong!
And I must deeply feel the prince receives me
With a most bountiful and gracious hand,

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Bestowing with rich measure gifts upon me,
The very moment when he, weak enough,
Allows mine enemies to dim his eyes,
And doubtlessly his hands to fetter too!

And yet he cannot see he is betrayed;
Nor can I fairly prove there are betrayers;
But that he calmly may betray himself,
And they more easily betray him too,
I should be still, nay should withdraw myself.

Who gives me this advice? and artfully
With honest, kind opinions, presses me?
'Tis Leonora Sanvitale's self,
The tender friend! Ha! ha! I know thee now!
O, wherefore did I ever trust her lip?
She was not honest when she shew'd me erst
So much of favour and of tenderness,
With sweetest words! Ah! no, she was, and is
A crafty creature; she hath ever turned
Tow'rds favour with a gentle, cautious step.
How oft have I most willingly deceiv'd

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Myself for thee! and yet in fact it was
But vanity that did deceive me. Well!
I look'd her through, and in self-flattery said,
Tow'rds others she is so; but yet tow'rds thee
She hath a true and open heart display'd:
I see it well, and only see too late:
I then was favour'd, and she gently lean'd
Upon the favour'd one. But now I fall,
She turns her back on me, as Fortune does.
And now she comes, the engine of my foes,
And glides along with hissing serpent tongue,—
The little artful snake, what magic tones!
How lovely look'd she! lovelier than ever!
How well each word did sit upon her lip!
Yet flatt'ry could not long conceal from me
Her false intentions; on her brow appear'd
The contrary of all she spoke inscrib'd
In clearest characters. I feel it soon,
Whene'er the way to reach my heart is sought,
And not sought heartily. I should away!
And should all speedily to Florence go!

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And why to Florence? Ah! I see it well;
There reigns the Medici's but new-form'd house;
True, not Ferrara's open enemy;
Yet silent Envy holds with chilling hand
The most exalted characters asunder—
Should I receive from yonder noble prince
Distinguish'd marks of favour, (as in truth
I might expect) the courtiers soon would render
My pure and lasting gratitude suspected!

Yes! I will go, but not where ye desire;
I will away, but farther than ye think.
What should I here? or, who can hold me back?
Too well I understood each single word
That I allur'd from Leonora's lip!
From syllable to syllable I caught
It all, and now know how the princess thinks.
Yes, yes, that too is certain; doubt it not!
"She gladly will dismiss me, when I go,
"If it conduces to my good." Oh might
She rather feel a passion in her heart,

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Which could my welfare and myself destroy!
E'en death should be more welcome than that hand,
Which cold and stiff deserts me. Yes, I go!
Now guard thyself, and let no seeming good,
Or friendship false, delude thy heart! for none
Can cheat thee, if thou cheatest not thyself.

SCENE IV.

ANTONIO. — TASSO.

ANTONIO.

Tasso, I am come here to speak to thee,
If thou canst hear me tranquilly.

TASSO.

Thou knowst
It is forbidden me to act; — it doth
Therefore become me well to wait and listen.

ANTONIO.

I find thee as compos'd as I might wish,

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And gladly speak to thee with heart at ease:
But in the prince's name I first must loose
The trivial bonds that seem'd to fetter thee.

TASSO.

The despotism that bound me makes me free:
I take my liberty, — nor ask for justice.

ANTONIO.

Now for myself I say, I have, it seems,
More seriously offended thee by speech,
Than I, by many a passion mov'd myself
Imagin'd. Yet no cold, insulting word
Unheedingly escap'd my angry lips; —
Thou, as a gentleman, need'st no revenge;
And wilt not, as a man, refuse thy pardon.

TASSO.

Which is more harsh, vexation or contempt,
I will not now inquire: the one inflicts
An inward wound, the other sears the brow.
The arrow of contempt turns back on him

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Which cannot well by letters be accomplish'd;
But presence soon can loose a web of knots.
I thought to ask the prince myself to-day,
But found no opportunity, and dare
Not now; yet hope thro' thee to have permission.

ANTONIO.

It seems not thrifty to absent thyself
The very moment when thy finish'd work
Commends thee to the princess and the prince:
A day of favour's like a harvest-day;
We must be occupied, so soon 'tis gone!
If thou withdraw'st thyself, thou wilt obtain
Nothing;—perhaps will lose thy present gain.
For Presence is a goddess of vast pow'r:
Learn, then, to know her influence, and stay!

TASSO.

Nought need alarm me, for Alphonso's soul
Is noble, and he's always great to me.
I wish to thank his heart alone for what
I hope; I will not basely cringe, nor fawn

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To win his favour; I will nought receive,
Which e'er he could repent that he had giv'n.

ANTONIO.

Then ask him not to let thee go. If he
Should grant thy pray'rs — 't will not be willingly;
I almost fear he will refuse outright.

TASSO.

He 'll do it willingly when rightly ask'd,
And thou hast pow'r to gain it if thou would'st.

ANTONIO.

Tell me the reasons that I can produce.

TASSO.

In ev'ry stanza let my poem speak!
The plan is laudable, e'en though the aim
My humble pow'r may ne'er at length attain.
In diligence and toil there wanted nought:
The stroll serene of many a beauteous day,
The silent space of many a sable night,

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Was all devoted to this holy lay.
The mighty masters of the prior world
I shily hop'd to near; and boldly plann'd
To rouse from lengthen'd sleep to noble deeds
Our own contemporaries; then, perhaps,
Join'd with a noble Christian host, to share
The fame and danger of a holy war.
But if my lay would wake the best of men,
It must be worthy of the best of men:
I owe Alphonso all that I have done;
Let me now thank him for the ending too?

ANTONIO.

The prince, and others, ever are at hand
To guide thy steps as well as Romans could:
Accomplish here thy work; 'tis here the place;
And hasten then to gain applause at Rome.

TASSO.

Alphonso first inspir'd me, and will be,
Doubtless, the last that will instruct my muse.
And thy advice, the counsel of the men

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Our court assembles, I most highly price.
Ye shall decide, where'er my friends at Rome
Cannot completely bring me to their views.
But these I must see. For Gonzaga hath
Assembled there a conclave, where at first
I must present myself. I scarcely can
Await its sentence; 'tis Angelio,
Antoniano, and Speron Speroni!
Thou surely know'st them, and what names they are!
Both confidence and ardour on my mind
Flow in, and it obeys most willingly.

ANTONIO.

Thou think'st but on thyself, and not the prince:
I tell thee, that he will not let thee go;
And if he does, 't will be against his will.
But thou wilt not desire what he would grant
Unwillingly. Shall I then warmly mediate
That which I cannot commend myself?

TASSO.

Wilt thou refuse me then my first request,
When I desire to prove thy proffer'd friendship?

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ANTONIO.

Refusing at the proper time is proof
Of truest friendship: Love doth oft confer
A noxious good, when more upon the wish,
Than on the asker's interest, it thinks.
Thou seemest at the moment to esteem
That good, which thou so hastily desirest,
And instantly would have thy wish fulfill'd.
The erring one for what he wants in truth,
And strength, by violence would compensate
Duty demands of me to check with all
My pow'r the haste that urges thee to ill.

TASSO.

Too long have I endur'd the tyranny
Of friendship, which of all the tyrannies
To me is most unbearable! Thy thoughts
Are otherwise, and therefore thou supposest
Thy thoughts are right. I gladly recognise
Thou would'st my welfare; do not, too, desire
That I should only find it in thy way.

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ANTONIO.

And shall I instantly, in calm cold blood,
With full and clear conviction injure thee?

TASSO.

I soon will free thee from this apprehension!
Thou canst not hold me back with words like these;
Thou hast declar'd me free; these doors, that lead
Unto the prince, are open to me now.
I leave to thee the choice. Or thou, or I!
The prince goes forth. There is no time to tarry
Resolve, decide! If thou goest not, I will
Myself adventure, be it as it may.

ANTONIO.

Let me beseech of thee a little time,
And do but wait his Highness's return!
And only not to-day!

TASSO.

This very hour,

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Now when 'tis possible! My foot-sole burns
Upon this marble pavement; my spirit
Can never find repose, until the free
Way's dust surrounds me, as I haste along.
I pray thee! for thou seeest how unfit
I am to speak at present with my lord;
Thou see'st, (for how alas! can I conceal it)
I am no longer master of myself,
And no terrestial pow'r can govern me.
'Tis only fetters that can hold me now!
Alphonso's not a tyrant; he declared
Me free. How gladly once I heard his voice!
To-day I cannot hear it. Leave me now
In freedom, that my senses may return,
I soon shall seek again the path of duty.

ANTONIO.

Thou mak'st me dubious. What is to be done?
I see how fast thy wild delusion spreads.

TASSO.

If thou wouldst have me think thou plannest good

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For me, accomplish my desire, as sure
Thou canst; the prince will let me go with pleasure,
And I shall lose nor favour nor protection;
For such a boon I will return thee thanks.
But if thou cherishest an ancient grudge,
And wouldst for ever banish me from court,
And everlastingly o'erturn my fortune,
And on the wide world drive me helpless forth,
Remain in thy intention, and resist!

ANTONIO.

Since then 'tis fated I should injure thee,
I'll choose the way thou choosest for thyself;
Which of us errs, th' event will soon decide!
Thou wilt away! and I foretell thee now,
Scarce hast thou turn'd thy back upon this house,
Before thy bosom longeth to return,
Thy obstinacy still will drive thee on:
At Rome confusion, melancholy, grief,
Await thee: here and there thou'lt miss thy aim.
I say not this to counsel thee again;
I but predict what soon will come to pass;

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Beforehand I invite thee now to place
Thy confidence in me, whate'er may happen. —
Now I'll address the prince, as thou desirest.

SCENE V.

TASSO. — (*Alone.*)

TASSO.

Yes, only go, and go assur'd away,
That thou hast pow'r to lead me as thou wilt.
I'm taught dissimulation, for thou art
A mighty master, and I quickly learn
Thus life compels us to appear, yea, e'en
To be, like those whom boldly, and with pride,
We could despise. How clearly see I now
The courtly web's extended artifice!
Antonio strives to urge me hence away,
Yet will not seem as if he drove me forth.
He plays the part of caution and reserve,

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That I may seem ill-tempered and untoward.
He calls himself my guardian, that he may
Direct me like a baby, when he finds
I will not be his slave. 'Tis thus the prince
And princess look on me with clouded brow.

They ought to keep me, he pretends; for Nature
With fairest merit hath endow'd me; — yet
Alas! with many human weaknesses
She hath these noble gifts accompanied;
With boundless pride, with narrow gloomy mind,
And with excess of sensibility.
It cannot now be otherwise, for once
That fate hath thus the individual form'd,
We must consent to take him as he is, —
Be patient with him, bear him, yea, perhaps,
As unexpected gain receive from him
What joy in some propitious hour may bring;
As for the rest, as chance hath brought him forth,
So must we let him live, and let him die.

Is that the firmness of Alphonso's soul,

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Who braves his foe, and truly guards his friend?
And do I know him as he meets me now?
Yes, well I recognise my whole misfortune!
Such is my destiny: they who remain
To others, firm, resolv'd, and true,—alas!
Are by the slightest whisper chang'd to me.

Hath not the coming of this man alone
My whole success in one short hour destroy'd?
And hath he not my fortune's edifice
From its most deep foundation overthrown?
Must I experience that? must I to-day?
As all press'd on me once, so all desert
Me now: as each one tried before to lure
Me to himself, and strove to cling to me;
Each one avoids me now, and thrusts me off.
And wherefore so? doth he outbalance then
Alone the scale of my deserts, and all
The love which I possess'd so richly once?

Yes, all avoid me now! Thou, too! thou, too!

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Princess belov'd; thou, too, withdraw'st thyself! —
She hath not e'en, in these sad hours, vouchsaf'd me
One single token, to bespeak her favour.
Have I deserv'd it from her? thou poor heart,
To whom it was so natural to love her!
If I but heard her voice, what new sensations
Darted in thrilling speechlessness accross
My bosom! — Gaz'd I on her, then the light
Of day was dim for me; her eyes, her lips,
Had such an all-resistless charm for me;
My trembling limbs scarce bore their wonted burden,
And I requir'd my spirits utmost strength
To save me from prostration at her feet.
I scarce could dissipate this giddiness.
Yet here, hold fast my heart! thou cloudless mind,
Become not here o'erclouded! yes, she too!
Dare I avow it? for I scarce believe it; —
Yes, I believe it but too much, and might
Be silent now. She too! excuse her if
Thou canst, — but do not hide from thee — she too!

Alas! this word, of which I ought to doubt

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As long as lives in me one breath of faith,
This word engraves itself, like Fate's decree,
Upon the brazen rim that circles round
The torment-tablet full-inscrib'd with woe.
My foes are for the first time strong, and I
Am reft of strength for ever. How should I
Withstand them, when amid the hostile ranks
She is enroll'd? How patiently await,
When she extends me not her hand, nor meets
My suppliant look with sympathetic gaze?
Thou dar'st to think it, and hast spoke it too,
And it is true, or thou couldst not have fear'd it!
And now, before Despair doth lacerate
Thy reason with its iron claws,—bewail
The hardness of thy bitter destiny,—
Repeat, repeat alone, she too! she too!

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ACT V.

SCENE I.

A Garden.

ALPHONSO. — ANTONIO.

ANTONIO.

I went at thy desire a second time
To speak with Tasso, and come from him now.
I have exhorted him, yea, press'd him hard;
But still his sentiments remain unchang'd;
He bids me pray thee earnestly, to grant
Him leave to visit Rome for some short time.

ALPHONSO.

I must acknowledge I am sore annoy'd,
And rather make avowal of my feelings
Than by concealment double my vexation.

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He will then travel: good, I hold him not:
He will away, he will to Rome; so be it!
Provided only Scipio Gonzaga,
Or crafty Medicis, purloins him not!
'Tis this that made our Italy so great,
That ev'ry neighbour with his neighbour strives
The most renown'd to cherish and employ.
A chief without his host methinks the prince,
Who fails to gather men of genius round him;
And he who lists not to the voice of song
Is a barbarian, be he who he may.
Him have I found, and on him fix'd my choice;
Yes, I am proud to have him in my train,
And have already done too much for him
Without necessity to lose him now.

ANTONIO.

I am embarrass'd, for I still must bear
'Fore thee the blame of what has chanc'd to-day;
I readily avow my fault, and it
Remains with thee to grant a gracious pardon:
But shouldst thou think I have not done my utmost

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To reconcile him unto me, I should
Be most disconsolate. Oh! speak to me
With look benign, that thus I may again
Be calm, and feel reliance on myself.

ALPHONSO.

Antonio, no; for that remain at rest,
I do ascribe it in nowise to thee:
I see too well the feelings of the man,
And only know too well what I have done,
How much I spar'd him, and how much forgot
What with propriety I had the right
To ask him. Man, 'tis true, can make himself
Master of much; and o'er the human mind
Distress and lengthen'd time can scarce prevail.

ANTONIO.

If many are employ'd for one, 'tis fair
That he in turn should strictly ask himself
How best he may promote what profits them.
Say, ought not he to govern and restrain
Himself with more than double force, who hath
So deeply form'd his talents, and at once

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Been emulous of ev'ry branch of knowledge,
And each accomplishment, which is allow'd
Frail mortals to attain? And thinks he so?

ALPHONSO.

We are not fated to remain at rest!
For if we think on its enjoyment, soon
To try our strength and courage, will a foe,
To try our patience, will a friend be giv'n.

ANTONIO.

But man's first duty meat and drink to choose,
Which Nature hath not so confin'd to him
As to th' unreasoning beast, fulfils he it?
Is he not rather, like a child, seduc'd
By all that pampers or that charms his taste?
When doth he mingle water with his wine?
He takes in indiscriminate profusion,
Spices and comfitures, and heating cordials,
And then bewails his melancholy mood,
His hasty mettle, and his fever'd blood,
And rails at Nature, and at guiltless Fate.

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How bitterly and foolishly have I
Not seen him parley oft with his physician:
I could have laugh'd, if that were laughable,
Which tortures one man, and the other plagues.
"I feel this sort of illness," full of spleen
He says; "Why boast so much your healing art?
"Find me a cure!" "'Tis good," the leech replies;
"Shun this and that:" "Such rules are much too strict."
"Then take this potion:" "No, it tastes so bad,
"It would produce revulsion." —"Well—drink water:"
"Drink water? never!—I have ever had
"The maniac's shudd'ring dread of it." "Then nought
"Can help thee:"—"Why—why so?"—"Because some new
"Disorder will augment thy present sufferings,
"And if thou dost not quickly fall a victim,
"Each day will add unto thy growing torments!" —
"Then to what purpose art thou styl'd physician?
"Thou knowst my malady, and shoulds't devise
"A remedy, and make it palateable,
"That I may not be forc'd to suffer first,
"In order to be free from suffering." — What
Thou laugh'st, my lord; and yet there is no doubt
Thou hast thyself oft' heard it from his lips.

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ALPHONSO.

I oft have heard it, and excus'd it oft.

ANTONIO.

It is most sure, that an intemperate life,
As it doth give us wild and heavy dreams,
Makes us at length in broadest daylight dream.
What else is his suspicion but a dream?
Where'er he treads, he thinks he is by foes
Surrounded; and that all, who contemplate
His genius, must be envious of his fame;
And all, who envy, haunt and hate him too.
Oft hath he burden'd thee with sad complaints,
Of broken locks, and intercepted letters,
Poison, and daggers! all before him floats!
These charges were examin'd, e'en thyself
Examin'd them, yet scarcely found a shadow.
No potentate's protection makes him sure,
No friendly bosom e'er refreshes him;
Can'st thou to such a one e'er promise joy?
Or hope with such a one a life of peace?

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ALPHONSO.

Antonio, thou wert right, if I desired
To draw from him a proximate advantage.
In truth there is already something gained
In not expecting a direct return
Of present usefulness. We do not reap
From every seed the self-same harvest. He
Who hopes to turn variety to profit
Should carefully employ each separate talent
In its own proper sphere. That truth was taught us
By the wise Medici; and e'en the Popes
Have oft' display'd it in their practice. For
With what indulgence, and what meek forbearance,
What princely patience have these men endur'd
The whims of Genius that required their aid,
Yet fain would seem as if it had no want!

ANTONIO.

Who knows it not, my prince, the toil of life
Teaches alone the goods of life to prize?
So young, he hath already more attain'd
Than he in mere contentment could enjoy
Oh! should he at some future time earn that

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Which now with open hand is offer'd him,
He then would manfully exert his strength,
And feel himself from step to step content.
A needy noble hath already gain'd
The aim of all his most aspiring hopes,
Whene'er a royal prince hath chosen him
His boon companion, and with gentle hand
Withdrawn from him his poverty. And should
He grant to him his confidence and favour,
And raise him to his side in tented field,
In conversation, or in state affairs;
Methinks a modest man might ponder o'er
His happiness in silent gratitude.
And Tasso adds to this besides the youth's
Most fairy fortune, for already doth
His country recognise and count on him.
Believe me, all his cross vexatious whims
On the broad cushion of his fortune rest.
He comes; dismiss him graciously, and give
Him time, in Rome, in Naples, where he will,
To make a search for what he misses here!
And what he only here can find again.

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ALPHONSO.

Will he first back unto Ferrara go?

ANTONIO.

No: he desires to stay at Belriguardo,
And will request a friend to send him here
Whate'er he may require for his excursion.

ALPHONSO.

I am content. My sister and her friend
Will soon return; and, as I ride, I still
May be at home before them. Thou wilt follow,
When all hath been arrang'd for him. And let
The castellan due orders have to lodge
Him in the palace while he stays, until
His baggage be transmitted, and we send
To him the letters, which I purpose yet
To offer him for Rome. He comes, farewell!

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SCENE II.

ALPHONSO. — TASSO.

TASSO.

The grace, which thou so oft hast granted me,
Appears to-day to me in fullest light.
Thou hast forgiv'n me what, too near thy presence,
In petulant and thoughtless mood I dar'd,
And with my adversary reconcil'd me:
Thou wilt permit me from thy court awhile
To travel, and wilt not withold from me
Thy princely favour. Full of confidence
I go, and hope this little term will soothe
The pangs that suffocate and cramp me now.
My spirit then will raise itself anew,
And on the path, which joyously and bold,
Encourag'd by thy look, I trod at first,
Thy princely favour will again deserve.

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ALPHONSO.

I wish thee for thy journey all success,
And hope thou wilt return to us renew'd
In health and cheerfulness. Thou then wilt bring
With pleasure back to us the double gain
Of ev'ry hour, which thou tak'st from us now.
I give thee letters to my friends at Rome,
And to my people there, and strongly wish
Thou would'st in confidence confine thyself
Chiefly to them, since I must ever deem
Thee mine, however distant thou mayst be.

TASSO.

Thou dost, my prince, o'erwhelm with favours him
That feels himself unworthy, and hath not
The pow'r to thank thee as he wishes now.
Instead of thanks I offer thee a pray'r!
I have my poem most of all at heart;
For I have labour'd much, and spar'd nor toil
Nor diligence, and yet there still remains
Too much behind my wish. I there should like,

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Where still the spirit floats of mighty men,
And floats efficiently; I there should like
To put myself to school again—and thus
My lay would thy applause more justly gain.
Oh! give me back the sheets, which only now
I feel asham'd to know are in thy hands.

ALPHONSO.

Thou wilt not take from me this very day,
What scarce thou hast this day presented me?
Let me, 'twixt thee and 'twixt thy poem, stand
As arbiter; for by assiduous toil
Beware thou dimmest not sweet Nature's bloom,
That lives so lovely in thy flowing rhimes,
And list not to advice from ev'ry side!
The thousand-form'd, the thousand-colour'd thoughts
Of many different men, who both in life
And in opinion contradict themselves,
The bard collects in one, and feareth not
To give dissatisfaction to the many,
That some may be more gratified. And yet
I say not, thou should'st never dare employ

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Correction's careful pencil here and there;
I promise thee thy poem shall be copied,
And thou shalt have it in brief space again:
From thy hand now it must in mine continue,
That with my sisters I may first enjoy
Its beauties worthily. And if thou bring'st
It back more perfect, then shall we receive
A more exalted pleasure, and as friends
Alone of many a passage caution thee.

TASSO.

I only now repeat in shame my pray'r,
Oh! let me have the copy back in haste,
For all my thoughts upon this work repose;
Now must it be whate'er it can become.

ALPHONSO.

I laud the care that occupies thy soul;
And yet, good Tasso, if 'twere possible
Thou should'st at first the open world enjoy,
And for a period should'st divert thyself;

TAYLOR INST. OXFORD
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By diet, too, thy fever'd blood correct:
For thus the beauteous concord of the mind,
Restor'd to health, would then impart to thee,
What now with clouded zeal thou seek'st in vain.

TASSO.

My prince, so seems it; yet, I am in health:
If I devote myself to toil again,
In turn my toil will make me healthy too.
Thou now hast known me long; I am not well
In wanton freedom. And to me repose
Doth yield the least repose. I feel it well
That ne'er this mind by nature was ordain'd
To float upon the gentle stream of days
In pleasure down to Time's expanded sea.

ALPHONSO.

All, that thou think'st, and dost, conducts thee deep
Into thyself. There lays around us still
Full many a chasm, that destiny hath dug;
Yet in our bosom here the deepest lies:

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'Tis luring, too, to hurl one's self therein.
I pray thee tear thyself from self away!
The man will gain whate'er the bard may lose.

TASSO.

In vain I check this pressure of distress,
Which day and night alternates in my breast.
If I were not to fancy and compose,
Then life would be no more a life to me.
Dost thou the silkworm e'er forbid to spin,
Because he spins himself more near his death?
The costly web from out his inmost core
He ceaselessly unfolds; nor leaves he off,
Until he wraps himself within his bier.
Oh! would some friendly God but give us once
The worm's all-enviable destiny
In some new sunny dale to quick expand
Our wings in joyous rapture!

ALPHONSO.

Hear me now!
Thou givest such a twofold happiness

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To life; oh! learn, I pray of thee, to know
That life's full worth, which thou dost still possess
In tenfold richness! Tasso, fare thee well.
The sooner thou dost come to us again,
The fairer will thy welcome be from us.

SCENE III.

TASSO. — (*Alone.*)

Hold fast, my heart, for it was rightly done;
'Tis hard for thee; it is the first time now
Thou can'st and may'st so well dissimulate.
Thou heardst it all aright;—yet those were not
His sentiments or words; it seem'd to me
As if Antonio's voice resounded there.
Oh! give attention! thou wilt hear it so
From all sides now. Yet only firm,—be firm;
'Tis but a moment longer, and 'tis done.
He who hath newly learnt dissimulation
Bears easily the semblance of good faith;—

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It soon will pass away, — exert thyself.

(*After a Pause.*)

Thou triumphest too soon; lo! there she comes,
The lovely princess comes! oh, what a feeling!
She comes! — the dark suspicion and despite
Of my rack'd breast dissolve themselves in grief.

SCENE IV.

PRINCESS. — TASSO.

(*Towards the end of the Scene the others.*)

PRINCESS.

Is thy resolve to leave us? or wilt thou
Remain at Belriguardo? — Should thy purpose
Indeed be fix'd, — I hope thy absence will,
At least, be brief. — Goest thou to Rome?

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TASSO.

I bend
My course first there; and if my friends receive
Me well, as I may hope, — with patient toil
And careful circumspection I shall give
My poem there its last refining touch:
For yonder shall I find a host of men,
Who may be counted universal masters.
And doth not every spot, and every stone
In yon eternal city speak to us?
How many thousand mute instructors gaze
On us with kind, yet earnest majesty!
If I cannot complete my poem there,
I never can complete it. Ah! I feel
No undertaking meets success with me!
Tho' I may change it, 't will be never perfect —
I feel, I feel it well, that mighty art
Which nourishes all others, and revives
A healthy mind, will make a wreck of me,
And drift me wildly forth. I haste away!
And soon to Naples.

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PRINCESS.

What! thou 'lt risk it then?
When still the rigid ban is not remov'd,
That doom'd alike thy father and thyself.

TASSO.

Thou warnest right, I 've thought upon it too.
Disguis'd I 'll go there, — in the tatter'd frock
Of way-worn pilgrim or of peasant clad; —
And steal in silence thro' the city, where
The stirring of the thousand hides the one. —
Behold! I hasten to the shore, and find,
A bark with kind and willing people, — peasants
Returning from their market to Sorrento;
There dwells my sister, she who was with me
The mournful solace of our woe-worn parents. —
I speak not in the boat, and disembark
In silence too, and gently creep along

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The winding path, and at the gates I ask
Where dwells Cornelia? tell me, I beseech you; —
Some friendly hand points out the street, and house:
While at my side the children run, and gaze
Upon the gloomy stranger's matted locks.
I reach at length the threshold. For the door
Stands open, and I step within the house —

PRINCESS.

Look up, if, Tasso, it be possible,
And learn the danger that surroundeth thee!
I spare thee; else should ask one little question,
Say, is it noble in this strain to speak?
And only on thyself to turn thy thoughts,
As if thou woundedst not thy friend's poor heart?
Say, know'st thou not my brother's sentiments,
And how his sisters treasure thee? Or hast
Thou not both felt, and recognis'd them oft?
Is in the rapid twinkling of an eye

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All chang'd so? Tasso! if thou wilt depart,
Leave us not sorrow and regret behind!—

(*Tasso averts his face.*)

It is, at least, some comfort to present
The veriest trifle to a friend upon
The eve of distant travel,—if it be
Not more than a poor cloak, or some new arm.
To thee we cannot give aught more; for what
Thou hast thou throw'st ungraciously away.
The pilgrim's shell, the peasant's dingy frock,
The staff of toil thou choosest thee, and goest
In willing poverty, taking from us
That which thou canst enjoy with us alone.

TASSO.

What! wilt thou then not thrust me quite away?
Oh! sweetest word, oh! consolation dear!
Defend me! guard me with thy aiding care!
Leave me in Belriguardo here, transfer
Me to Gonsandoli, or where thou wilt!

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So many a beauteous castle hath the prince,
So many a garden, which the whole year round
Is kept in order, where ye scarce beguile
A single day, or e'en a single hour.
Yes, choose the most remote, where ye may not
Set foot for a long train of years, — and which
Perhaps is now neglected and forgotten!
There send me forth! and let me there be thine!
How I should foster all thy shrubs! and guard
Against the autumn-blast thy citron-trees!
The loveliest flow'rs shall strike their spreading roots
Along the fragrant beds; and ev'ry path
Be kept in trimmest order. Leave me too
The palace; — it shall claim its turn of care!
I'll ope the windows at the proper time,
That lengthen'd dampness may not spoil the paintings,
And will with lightest brush skim gently o'er.
The walls with stucco-work so fair adorn'd
The polish'd hearth shall most effulgent shine;
No stone, no tile shall there be out of place,
No weed from out the crevices shall spring!

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PRINCESS.

My barren heart suggests no word of counsel,
No comfort can I find for thee, for us.
Mine eye looks round to see if some kind god
Will in his pity aid us, or discover
A health-restoring plant, a mild potation,
To give thy bosom peace, and peace to us.
The truest word that floweth from the lip,
The fairest remedy can work no more. —
'Tis time I leave thee, yet my heart can ne'er
Abandon thee

TASSO.

Ye gods, and is it she
That speaks with me in pity of my lot?
And have I then mistaken that proud heart?
And could such base pusillanimity
Have sway'd me when so near her cherish'd presence?
No, no, thou art it! Now am I it too;
Proceed, and let me ev'ry comfort hear
From those sweet lips, and do not now withdraw

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Thy counsel from me. Speak, what shall I do
To make thy princely brother pardon me,
And make thee too feel pleasure in forgiving,—
So that ye may again rejoice to count me
The humblest of your servants?—Tell me what?

PRINCESS.

It is but little that we seek from thee,
And yet it seems as though 't were all too much:
Thou should'st in kindness give us up thyself;
We would have nought from thee, but what thou art,
Provided thou art with thyself content;
Happy thyself,—thou mak'st us happy too,
And we are only sad, when thou art wretched:
And if perchance we may appear impatient,
'Tis but because we would afford thee help,
And see, alas! there is no remedy,
If thou wilt grasp not at the friendly hand,
Which, longingly stretch'd out, attains thee not.

TASSO.

Thou art the self same, as when first thou cam'st

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A pure and hallow'd angel to my view!
Forgive the mortal's dim and rayless look,
If for a moment he mistook thee so.
Again he knows thee! and the soul expands
Itself eternally to honour thee.
My heart is full of rapturous tenderness!
'Tis she, she stands before me. What a feeling!
Can Aberration lure me to thy side?
Or is it frenzy? or a lofty mind,
That to the highest, purest virtue clings?
Yes that, yes that 's the feeling, that alone
Hath pow'r to make me happy upon earth;
'Tis that that leaves me so forlorn, whene'er
I would withstand it, and from out my heart
Would banish it. This passion I once thought
To conquer; — with my inmost being strove, —
And strove; — yea, wantonly destroy'd myself,
To whom thou dost so thoroughly belong.

PRINCESS.

If, Tasso, I must listen to thee longer,
Restrain the fever'd glow that frights me so.

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TASSO.

Say, doth the goblet's brim restrain the wine,
That froths, and foams, and trembles, bubbling o'er?
With ev'ry word thou dost exalt my bliss,
With ev'ry word more brightly beams thine eye.
I feel that I am chang'd internally,
I feel myself from ev'ry care reliev'd,
Free as a god; and all I owe to thee!
A force unspeakable, that rules my fate,
From thy lip flows; yes, yes, thou mak'st me all
Thine own; and for the future nought belongs
To me of all my whole and proper self.
Mine eye is dimm'd in happiness and light,
My senses totter, and my limbs are weak;
Thou irresistibly attractest me,
And mak'st my heart without an effort thine.
Thou hast for ever won me to thy side;
So take then here my whole existence too.

[*He falls in her arms, and presses her to him.*]

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PRINCESS.

(*Pushing him off, and retiring in haste.*)

Away!

LEONORA.

What is the matter? Tasso! Tasso!

[*She goes to the Princess.*]

TASSO.

(*Designing to follow her.*)

O God!

ALPHONSO.

(*Who for some time was approaching with* ANTONIO.)

He's lost his senses; hold him firm.

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SCENE V.

TASSO. — ANTONIO.

ANTONIO.

If near thee stood, (as thou dost ever think
Thou art surrounded by a host of foes,)
An enemy, how would he triumph now?
Unhappy! scarce am I recover'd yet!
Whene'er we meet what's unexpected quite,
Whene'er our look is fix'd on something monstrous,
Our startled senses for a while stand still,
For we have nought to which we can compare it.

TASSO.

(*After a long pause.*)

Fulfil thy office; yes, thou art it well!
Yes, thou deserv'st the princely confidence;
Fulfil thy office, martyr me unmov'd
To ling'ring death with torments slow, for now

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The doom is fix'd! Draw! draw the arrow hard,
That I may feel the agonising barb
That lacerates me!
Thou art the tyrant's worthy instrument:
Be warder of his gaol, be torturer:
How well! how properly they suit thee both!
[*Towards the scene.*
Yes, tyrant, go! thou could'st not to the last
Dissimulate; yes, go in triumph now!
Thou hast thy slave well prison'd: and hast spar'd him
Wisely for new-invented writhing pangs.
Yes, go, I hate, abhor thee; and I feel
The shudd'ring horror despotism excites,
Whene'er it grasps in wantonness and wrong.
[*After a pause.*
Do I at length behold myself an exile —
Thrust out, and banish'd as a beggar hence?
It seems I was enwreath'd and laurel'd so,
To be a victim on the shrine of blood!
And, at the very last, with slipp'ry words,
To have my only property — my poem —
Lur'd from me! — and alas! withheld from me!

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In your hands now my only fortune rests,
Which would have ev'ry where commended me,
And which was left from hunger to preserve me!
I see now, why I should keep holiday.
It is a plot, of which thou art the head;
That thus my lays may still be incomplete, —
My name remain unknown, — and my detractors
Gloat o'er a thousand faults, — until at length
I am forgotten. Hence the reason why
I should be us'd to idleness — and why
I should be careful of myself and talents.
O worthy friendship, dear anxiety!
Detestable I thought the growing plot
That all unseen and restless girt me round, —
But more detestable it is become.

And thou, fair Siren! that so tenderly,
And so divinely lur'd me, I behold
Thee now at once! O God! and why so late?
But we so willingly betray ourselves,
And honour villains, who have honour'd us.

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For men are ne'er acquainted with each other;
'Tis only galley-slaves that know themselves,
Who pant in chains on one contracted bank,
Where none hath aught to ask, and none
Hath aught to lose. These men, they know themselves;
Where ev'ry one avows himself a rogue,
And takes his neighbour for a villain too.
We only courteously mistake the rest,
That they may in their turn mistake us too.
How long thy hallowed image hath conceal'd
The cold coquette, that works her little arts.
The mask hath fall'n — I see Armida now
Of ev'ry charm bereft; yes, thou art her!
Of thee my lay in prescient tones hath sung!

And then the cunning little mediatrice!
How deep before me is she now debas'd!
Ah! now I hear her gentle footsteps sound;
I know the ring round which she us'd to glide.
I know you all, let that content me now!
If Misery hath bereft me of my all,
I thank it still, for it hath taught me truth.

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ANTONIO.

I hear thee, Tasso, with astonishment,
Though well I know how quick thy rapid thoughts
Can fly from one extreme unto the other.
Regain thy senses! and thy fury curb!
Word after word thou dost blaspheme, yet that
Might be to thy despair e'en still forgiv'n,
Though ne'er canst thou forgive it to thyself.

TASSO.

Address me not with soft and honied lip,
And let me hear from thee no artful word!
Extend me not the hollow happiness
To gain my senses but to lose them soon.
I feel my inmost bones are crush'd, and yet
I live to feel that I am tortur'd so.
Despair twines round me with infuriate rage,
And in the hell-pangs, that destroy my soul,
Fell blasphemy is grief's most gentle cry.
I will away! and if thou art to trust,
Then quickly point to me the path from hence.

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ANTONIO.

I will not leave thee desolate in need;
Tho' thy composure hath entirely fail'd,
I shall display no peevish want of patience.

TASSO.

And must I yield myself a captive then?
Yes, yes, I yield myself, and so 'tis done;
Since I resist not, all is well with me.
Oh! let me in my agony repeat,
How fair was what myself I play'd away.—
Yet they depart. O God! too soon I see
The dust that from their carriage rears itself.
The riders are advanc'd; there, there they drive!
There, there they go! and came I not from thence?
They are away, and are in anger with me.
Oh! could I once again but kiss his hand!
Oh! could I at this moment, take, my leave!
And only now once say to them, forgive me!
And only hear them say thou art forgiv'n!
But ah! I hear it not, and never shall.

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Yes, I will go; Oh! give me, give me now
Their presence only for a moment back!
Perhaps I should be cur'd again, Yet no,
I am rejected, I am banish'd, yes,
Myself I've banish'd, and no more shall hear
That soothing voice; and never, never more
That gaze encounter—

ANTONIO.

Hear the suggestion of a man's voice, one
Who near thee not without emotion stands!
Thou art not yet so wretched as thou thinkest,
Reman thyself! thou givest in too much.

TASSO.

And am I then as wretched as I seem?
Am I as weak as I do shew myself?
Is all then lost? has mining sorrow, too,
As if the earth had quak'd, the building chang'd
Into a mass of rubbish and decay?
And is no talent more, with thousand folds,

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Left to divert me, and to prop me up?
Is ev'ry force annihilated now,
Which once bestirr'd my bosom? am I nought?
Become quite nought?
No, no, it all is there, yet I am nought;
I from myself am stol'n, and she from me!

ANTONIO.

Yet if thou seem'st so all entirely lost,
Compare thyself! and what thou art avow!

TASSO.

Yes, thou remindest me at proper time!
Doth history furnish no example more?
Doth no fam'd mortal stand before mine eyes,
Who more hath borne than I have ever borne,
That by comparison I may be calm'd?
No, all is there! yet one thing still remains;
For Nature hath bestow'd upon us tears,
The shriek of anguish, when the man at last
Can bear no more; above all else to me,

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In grief she left me melody and words,
The deepest fulness of my woe to wail;
And if mankind are in their torments mute,
A God gave me to tell the pangs I feel.

[Antonio *goes to him, and gives him his hand.*]

TASSO.

Most worthy man! thou standest firm and still;
While I am like the tempest-troubled wave.
But think a little; — do not overrate
The value of thy force! for Nature's pow'r,
That bas'd these craggy rocks, did also give
The wave its undulant mobility: —
She sends her storm, — the rolling billow flows,
And curls, and swells, and tumbles o'er in foam: —
Yet in that wave how beauteously the sun
Was once reflected; kindred stars repos'd
Upon yon breast that heav'd so tenderly.
Dimm'd is that ray, and vanish'd that repose!
In danger I no longer know myself,
And am no more asham'd to make th' avowal.

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The helm is broken, and the vessel cracks
On ev'ry side. The bursting planks are torn
With force resistless from my feet away!
With both my arms I wildly cling to thee;
So clings the sailor to the rock at last
On which his gallant bark hath wreck'd itself.

END OF TORQUATO TASSO.

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MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

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Dieses Blatt nebst dem Biographical account etc. wird nach

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BIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT

OF

THE AUTHORS OF THE FOLLOWING POEMS.

BIERNACKY, Chr., born at Altona, 1797; Curate at Friedrichetadt, in Holstein; Author of several Songs, etc. and a Didactic Poem, der Glaube, Schlesvick, 1825.

F. v. EICHENDORFF, born at Lubowitz near Ratibor in Silesia; he is the Author of a Novel, Ahnung und Gegenwart, a Dramatic Poem, Krieg den Philistern, and two little Tales, Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts, and das Marmorbild.

GOETHE, J. W. von, born at Frankfort-sur-le-Maine, August 28th 1749. died at Weimar, March 22. 1832.

GRILLPARZER, Fr., born at Wien 1790. Author of Sappho, die Ahnenfrau, das goldene Vließ etc.

HEINE, Heinrich, born at Düsseldorf 1797, Author of Reisebilder, Buch der Lieder etc., lives now in Paris.

HOELTY, L. H. C., born at Mariensee in Hannover, 1748, died at Gottingen, September 1st 1776 — Gedichte von Hölty, herausgegeben von Voß, 1804.

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MÜCHLER, C. F., born at Berlin September 2d 1763, lives in Berlin.

SCHILLER, F. v., the first dramatic poet of Germany, born at Marbach in Wirtemberg, November 10th, 1759; died May 9th. 1805.

UHLAND, L., one of the first lyric poets, lives in Stuttgardt; Author of Gedichte von L. Uhland, 3te Auflage, Tübingen, 1826.—Ernst von Schwaben, ein Trauerspiel.

UZ, Peter Johann, born at Anspach 1720, died at Anspach May 12th 1796.

WERNER, Fr. Lud. Zach., born at Konigsberg in Prussia; died at Vienna January 17th 1823. Author of das Kreuz an der Ostsee, Wanda, der 24ste Februar etc.

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MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

FROM THE ARABIAN.

I SCARCE deem'd 'twas the flame of love
That lent to her eye that bright glare;
When my shipmates, eager to rove,
Cried, "on board, for the wind blows fair."

She comes:—the hot tears that arise,
Her soul's bitter anguish foreshew;
And only in half-broken sighs
Her heavy heart sobs forth its woe.

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Shily, on my bosom reclin'd,
She clasp'd me in haste and in grief:
'Tis thus, the hush'd breath of the wind
All tremblingly kisses the leaf.

Alas! we were destin'd to part!
Once more on my face her gaze fell,
And she cried, in anguish of heart,
"O, had I ne'er known thee — 't were well!"

BIERNACKY.

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THE IDEAL.

And wilt thou then thus faithless flee,
With all thy fantasies divine,
With ev'ry source of joy and glee,
Regardless of each pray'r of mine?
Can nought retard thee, fleeting spell?
Thou golden hour of life's pure bliss?
'Tis vain! thy hast'ning billows swell
Eternity's untried abyss!

Set are those suns whose radiant beams
Were wont upon my path to rest;
Dissolv'd are those ideal dreams,
Which kindled once my joyous breast:
In beings which fertile Fancy trac'd
A sweet Credulity was there,
Till rude Reality effac'd
What once was so divinely fair!

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With eager longing, as of old,
Pygmalion clasp'd the stone ador'd,
Till on the marble's cheek, so cold,
Sensation's glowing blush was pour'd;
So round fair Nature's form I clung,
With arms of Love and young Desire,
Until she breath'd, and warmly hung
Upon my poet-breast of fire!

Sharing my flame that inward burn'd,
A living voice the dumb one found,
And Love's warm kiss as warm return'd,
Responsive to my bosom's sound:
Then liv'd for me the shrub, the flow'r;
Then sung the fountain's silver-fall;
Then e'en the soulless felt the pow'r
Of joyous life's rebounding call.

A lab'ring whole, with mighty strife,
Distended my contracted breast,
Till forth it stepp'd to light and life,
In deed and word, in look and gest:

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How vast was my internal world,
While in the bud conceal'd it lay;
How little, when it was unfurl'd,
This little e'en of poor mean clay!

How sprung, with spirit wing'd to dare,
Rejoicing in delusive hope,
Unbridled yet by wasting care,
The youth on life's enchanting slope;
Until pure aether's palest star
He reach'd in Fancy's onward flight;
Too high was nought, and nought too far
For his wild pinion's soaring might.

How lightly was he borne afar!
The happy what can baffle long?
As danc'd before life's blithesome car
A lofty-brow'd escorting throng!
Love with its sweet reward was there,
And Fortune with her wreath of gold,
And Glory with her star-crown'd hair,
And Truth in brightest sunshine bold!

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Alas! that e'en in middle way
Should thus be lost th' attendant train;
Unheeding faith, without delay
Each wanders in his turn amain.
Light-footed Happiness had fled;
Unsated still was Science' thirst;
And there were clouds of doubt and dread
Round Truth's bright glance prepar'd to burst.

I saw high Glory's hallow'd crown
On many a vulgar brow profan'd!
Too short was Spring; bleak tempests frown;
And vernal Love's fair light had wan'd!
More still it ever was, and more
Deserted was my rugged way;
E'en pallid Hope scarce deign'd to pour
On that dim path one glimm'ring ray!

Of all this noisy train of pride
Who yet remains my track to greet?
Who stands consoling at my side,
And follows to my last retreat?

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Thou, who art skill'd to heal each woe,
Friendship, whose hand smooths all around,
Who shar'st my burdens here below,
Thou, whom I early sought and found!

And she, who loves with thee to dwell,
Like thee, who turneth grief to joy,
Employment, — who hath labour'd well,
And buildeth never to destroy, —
Who on Eternity's vast pile
But grain of sand on grain uprears,
Still from the debt of time, the while,
Eraseth minutes, days, and years!

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THE GERMAN MUSE.

No bright Augustan era gleam'd,
No Medicean favour beam'd
  Its smiles upon the German muse;
Unfoster'd by the hand of pow'r,
She dar'd unfold each op'ning flow'r,
  Where princely suns no rays diffuse.

By Germany's first son of fame —
By the great Frederick's mighty name,
  She was nor aided, nor rever'd:
The German can with pride avow —
With beating heart and lofty brow,
  Himself his fame he form'd and rear'd.

'Tis thus that stalks with loftier stride,
'Tis thus that flows in fuller tide

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The German bard's exalted strain;
And swelling in its own full force,
And gushing from the heart's deep source,
Spurns all restraining rules as vain!

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THE KNIGHT OF TOGGENBURG,

A BALLAD.

"To thee, Sir Knight, a sister's love
"Devotes this faithful heart;
"No other flame ask me to prove,
"It makes my bosom smart!
"For tranquil I can see thee come,
"And tranquil see thee go;
"Thy tears that flow in streams so dumb,
"Their source I may not know."

He hears with grief no words confest,
With thoughts that inly bleed;
In haste he clasps her to his breast,
And bounds upon his steed:
He sends to all his vassals brave,
Through Schweizland's ev'ry part,
To march unto the holy grave,
A cross upon each heart.

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Unrivall'd deeds were bravely wrought
By their heroic arms;
Their plum'd helms wav'd, as bold they fought,
Amid the hostile swarms.
Scarce Toggenburg's appalling name
The Moslem dares endure;
Still feels his heart the smould'ring flame
Of grief that knows no cure.

A year he bore it 'midst his sighs,
He cannot bear it more,
'Tis vain to chase repose that flies,
He quits the battle's roar.
He sees a ship on Joppa's strand,
Whose sail the breeze receives,
It wafts him to his dear-lov'd land,
Where her pure bosom heaves!

Then at her moated castle's gate
The wand'ring pilgrim knock'd;
And ah! with words of thund'ring fate,
For him it is unlock'd.

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"Her whom thou seek'st — the veil she wears;
"She is the bride of Heav'n;
"'Twas yesterday, 'mid festal pray'rs,
"That she to God was giv'n!"

From where his father's turrets reign
He rush'd in hurrying speed;
He never saw his arms again,
Nor more his faithful steed: —
From Toggenburg he downward came,
Unnotic'd and unknown,
For round his noble, manly frame,
A hair-cloth vest was thrown.

He builds himself a hut, by times,
Near yonder craggy steeps,
Where from the midst of dusky limes
The cloister'd convent peeps;
And tarrying from the morning-light,
Till evening's planets shone;
Hope soothing still his aching sight,
He sat there all alone!

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He looks upon the pile in tears,
Looks many a long hour round
On his love's window, till he hears
That window's op'ning sound;
Until his lady-love he sees,
And can her fair form trace,
Bending to catch the valley's breeze,
With mild, angelic face!

And then all happily he lay,
Consol'd by sleep's sweet rest,
Rejoicing still when morning's ray
His wak'ning eyelids blest.
And thus he sat for many a day,
And many a long hour round,
Awaiting, without grief's display,
The window's op'ning sound.

Until his lady-love he sees,
And can her fair form trace,
Bending to catch the valley's breeze
With mild, angelic face.

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And there he sat a corpse, one morn!
Yet still his pallid look,
Compos'd by death in stare forlorn,
The window ne'er forsook!

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TO EMMA.

'Mid cloudy mists remote and far,
There lies my happiness gone past,
And only on one beauteous star
With eyes of love my look I cast;
But, like that star's pale glimm'ring light,
It only is a gleam of night.

Ah! wert thou in thy last long sleep,
And hadst thou sunk 'neath Death's grim dart,
Though I should sigh for thee and weep,
Thou still wouldst live for my fond heart.
But, ah! thou liv'st in light of day,
Yet shedst on me no loving ray!

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Emma, doth love so shortly last?
And can it thus so transient be?
And what is gone, and what is past,
Was this, say, Emma, love for me?
And is its heav'nly flaming flood
Extinguish'd like an earthly good?

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THE YOUTH BY THE FOUNTAIN.

A youth beside a fountain lay,
And there a flow'ry garland wove;
He saw it, as 'twas borne away,
Upon the bubbling wave-dance rove.
Thus flies each day I newly hail,
As restless as the fountain there!
And thus the glow of youth grows pale,
As fades the wreath that bloom'd so fair!

O, ask not why I thus am sad,
While life displays its fairest hue;
'Tis true that all with hope is glad,
When spring unfolds itself anew.
The voices of a thousand strains,
That from awaken'd nature flow,
Do only rouse in me such pains
As steep my inmost heart in woe!

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Can that joy deck with smiles my cheek,
  Which hath fair Spring, its source in thee?
There is one, only one, I seek,
  And that, though near, is far from me!
My longing arms I wide extend
  Towards that dear and shadowy form;
I reach it not where'er I bend,
  And rages on my bosom's storm.

Come down to me, thou goddess fair;
  O leave thy eminence divine!
And flow'rs that dawn'd in spring's pure air
  I'll scatter in that lap of thine.
O, hark! with lays the grove resounds,
  The fountain ripples clearly there!
The smallest cot hath ample bounds
  For ev'ry happy, loving pair.

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COUNT EVERARD'S WHITE THORN.

A BALLAD.

Count Ev'rard, of the beard,
From Wirtemberg's fam'd land
In pious ardour steer'd
To Palestina's strand.

He once on that far shore
Rode through a fresh-grown wood,
And a green bough he tore
From where a white-thorn stood.

With care he plac'd is tight
In his mail'd helmet's side;
He wore it in the fight,
And over ocean's tide.

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At home he made it firm
In its congenial earth;
To many a youthful germ
The gentle spring gave birth.

The faithful Count, and true,
Beheld it ev'ry year;
And as his white-thorn grew
Shed joy's delicious tear.

The Count by age was bent,
The shrub was now a tree;
Against it oft he leant,
In deepest reverie.

Its high-arch'd vault oft brought,
Amidst its rustlings bland,
The olden time to thought,—
The far, far distant land.

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THE BLESSEDNESS OF LOVE.

Thrice happy he! who hath the lov'd one found
That greeted once his youthful dream,
When arm round arm, and thought round thought was wound,
And soul to soul pour'd out its stream.

The hut to golden palace Love can change,
And strew with joy the desert's blight,
Unveil to us the Godhead's noiseless range,
A foretaste give of heav'n's delight.

It makes the heart of melancholy gay;
It lays us on a rosy bed,
And lifts us by a heav'nly ladder's way,
To where the Godhead's glance is shed.

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It gives the morning-wreath a red more bright,
A lighter green the forest shade,
A sweeter note the late tun'd flute of night,
Which sounds from out the village glade.

The loving are on love's own pinions bold
To zones more bless'd all lightly borne;
And e'en receive the heav'nly crown of gold,
Before their garb of clay is worn.

They care for no delight the world can yield,
A world within themselves they feel;
And mock at thee, who dost earth's sceptre wield,
Before whom all must crouch and kneel.

Soft bent upon the spring turf's silken pride,
Around a fountain's flow'ry brink,
The party-colour'd bubble they deride
Of love content with barren wink.

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The hand compress'd, which thrills the tingling frame,
Th' intoxication of a glance,
The kiss, which trembles on the lip of flame,
Yields them an angel's glowing trance.

A look of love, through which the fix'd soul gleams,
In which e'en Heav'n itself appears, —
The magic interchange of Passion's beams
Is worth a thousand worldly years.

The kiss, e'en envied by the seraph throng,
Chases their morning dream away;
The circling dance, the ever-blooming song,
Surrounds them all the live-long day.

O'er their chaste bed the softest slumber dreams,
'Twas such o'er Eden's foliage sunk;
Their chain, no being a chain of pleasure deems,
Who ne'er from Love's sweet cup hath drunk.

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THE WEEPING BRIDE.

Thy manly form was fair to see,
Though bold, and wild, yet still divine
I once confided all to thee,
Not prizing what was only mine.
Thou left'st me, false one, to bewail;
And flow'rs, and joy, and spring's bright brow,
And all the world — I saw grow pale:
Ah, God! how lonely am I now!

How oft I climb'd yon heights to see,
And many pass I saw full well;
A thousand times I greeted thee,
Though thee I saw not in the dell.
And many a spring, with varied jest,
Hath come and gone in gay career,
Yet ah! to my deceived breast
No spring will e'er again appear!

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Bright flow'ry wreaths my locks entwine;
In richest robes my person drest
Another leads me to the shrine;
My parents, they are highly blest.
I, too, seem gay amid the throng,
The sun shines forth in wonted pride,
And through the noisy shout and song
No one remarks, how weeps the bride.

The spring-lays are renew'd apace,
And thou com'st back, when years have pass'd,
And standest still to there retrace
A happiness that did not last.
In desert waste the garden lies,
The house is desolate and lone,
No lover to the window flies,
And thee and me none there hath known.

Thou seest a lark ascend, and dare
To Heav'n's refulgent portal stray;
A brook so strangely murmurs there,
It seems to weep itself away.

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'Tis there that they have lain me low,
Beneath the grave-stones common scroll;
I can no more now let thee know,
How once I lov'd thee from my soul!

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MELANCHOLY.

I can in many a moment sing,
As tho' I felt the glee;
In secret still the tear-drops spring,
And then my heart is free.

As nightingales, while breezes play
O'er spring's external bloom,
In sad notes pour their longing lay
From out their cage's tomb.

All hearts then listen to the strain,
And all is joy around;
For no one feels the soul-wrung pain
Of that lay's doleful sound.

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AT PARTING.

It is so well with me, when near,
So ill, when I am far from thee,
Where'er thou dwell'st, where'er I steer,
To thee my ev'ry thought must flee!
This spot would me for ever hold,
Could I with thee for ever stay!
But see! the waves of live have roll'd
Me like the lightest leaf away.

The pilgrim staff in weary hand,
With tears I track my fate, so blind;
My path may turn to many a land,
My heart remains with thee behind,
At morn's bright dawn, by eve's dim light,
Appears thine image lov'd to me.
And what I dream, and what I write,
Is ever dream and lay of thee!

ANONYMOUS.

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THE SHEPHERD'S LAMENT.

Aloft on yonder mountain-nook
A thousand times I go,
And leaning on my shepherd's crook
Gaze on the vale below.

I slowly track the ranging sheep,
My little dog keeps guard;
And down the hill at length I creep, —
To tell thee how 't were hard.

In these fair meeds effulgent blow
Flow'rets of ev'ry hue!
I gather them, yet never know
To whom such gift is due.

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I lie beneath yon tree expos'd
To tempest, storm, and rain;
But still that door is always clos'd.
And my fond dream is vain!

Yes, brightly o'er that cot there gleams.
The rainbow's soothing ray;
But she hath wander'd fair, it seems,
In distant climes away:

In realms remote; nay, farther still;
Perhaps beyond the deep:
Then on—my flock; my eyelids fill,
And oh! I fain would weep!

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CONSOLATION IN TEARS.

"How comes it thou alone art sad,
"Where all around is gay;
"One sees that in thine eye thou'st had
"A tear, scarce wip'd away."

"What, though in solitude I weep,
"So is my grief mine own;
"So sweetly forth the tear-drops creep,
"My heart they ease alone."

"Thy friends to joy and glee are born,
"Seek in their breasts relief:
"What hast thou lost? Why thus forlorn?
"Confide to them thy grief."

"Ye laugh and sing; your friendly zeal
"My pain can never know:
"Nay, I've not lost it; though I feel
"To me its want is woe."

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"Cheer up then, now, this very hour,
"Thy young blood will not fail;
"We have, at thy years, strength and pow'r,
"And spirit to prevail."

"Ah! no, it baffles all my care,
"It is remote and far,
"It dwells as high, it shines as fair,
"As o'er us yonder star!"

"The stars, we surely ne'er desire;
"We gladden at their light;
"And with transported gaze admire
"On such a tranquil night."

"In transport, too, I strain my sight,
"Through many a livelong day;
"Then let me weep away the night,
"As long as weep I may."

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THE WANDERER'S NIGHT LAY.

Thou, who from Heav'n above art sent,
Thou, who ev'ry sorrow stillest,
Him who with twofold pangs is rent,
With a twofold life thou fillest:
By passion's strife I'm toss'd and torn,
As joy and woe exchange their part,
Oh! leave me not, sweet Peace, forlorn,
But come, oh! come unto my heart.

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TO THE MOON.

Again thou fillest brake and dell
With dim and misty glance;
Again my soul avows thy spell,
And melts in liquid trance.

Thou sheddest thy all-soothing beam
O'er this my chosen spot,
As Friendship's eye, with mellow'd gleam,
Illumes my destin'd lot.

My heart, — it owns that lengthen'd strain
Of mingled peace and strife;
In solitude 'twixt joy and pain
I tread the path of life.

Digitized by Google

Flow on, fair stream; no hour of bliss
Is left for me to know:
Thus ebb'd away the jest, the kiss,
And constancy ebb'd so.

A time there was when I possess'd
That rich and costly boon;
Oh! would that for my bosom's rest
I could forget it soon!

Glide onward, stream, the dale along
Without repose or calm;
Glide on, and whisper to my song
Thy lay's melodious balm!

As, when thy waters hoarse resound
With swoll'n and wintry tide;
Or, when thou ripplest gently round
Some spring-bud's op'ning pride.

Digitized by Google

Happy, who from the world remov'd
Lives without hate's alloy, —
Clasps to his heart a friend belov'd,
And shares his ev'ry joy.

The mass of men have never guess'd
That joy's seductive pow'r,
Which through the labyrinth of the breast
Strays at the midnight hour.

Digitized by Google

TO THE CHOSEN ONE.

Thy hand and lip on mine compress'd,
Faithful, fair maid, remain;
Farewell! there is for me no rest,
Wand'ring o'er land and main:
But if by storm and tempest spar'd,
I greet the port once more,
And feel a joy by thee unshar'd,
May Gods their vengeance pour!

What's nobly dar'd, is partly won,
Bold efforts glory crowns;
Stars shine for me, as shines the sun,—
Night on the coward frowns.
Listless at thy seductive side
'Twould rend my heart to be,
Grim danger's hour I've oft defied—
Defied for only thee!

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The vale is found where we'll abide,
Nor distant is the day,
And calmly watch the streamlet glide,
While ev'ning sheds her ray.
In that meed grows the poplar tree,
The beech is in the grove,
And oh! behind a cot shall be,
From whence we'll never rove!

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THE GOD AND THE BAJADERE.

AN INDIAN LEGEND.

Comes Mahadoh, the lord of earth,
The sixth time down from Heav'n;
To feel, as tho' of mortal birth,
How joy and woe are giv'n.
He fits himself with men to live,
Expos'd to chances blind:
Shall he or punish, or forgive,
As man, he sees mankind.
And having the town, as a pilgrim, inspected,
Consider'd the great and the poor not neglected,
He left it at eve his path onward to wind.

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Lo! when at length he farther stray'd,
Where the last houses rise,
A lost, forlorn, and lovely maid,
With painted cheek he spies.
"Hail! maiden;" "thanks — stay shortly there,
"I haste with all my pow'r."
"And who art thou?" "A Bajadere,
"And this is Love's sweet bow'r."
She hurries with cymbals to dance for her lover,
So skill'd in the circle to flutter and hover;
She bends, and she bows, and she gives him a flow'r.

Her flatt'ry lures him to the door,
Her charms within the walls:
"Quick, beauteous guest, the lamp shall pour
"Its light upon these halls:
"And art thou tir'd, I'll give thee rest,
"And soothe thy feet that smart;
"With what thou will'st, thou shalt be blest,
"I'll joy or jest impart."
She busily sooth'd all the pains he pretended;
The godly one smiles, and with foresight extended
Thro' gloomy pervertedness sees still a heart!

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He claims of her a menial's part,
She smiles more soft and sly;
The maiden's first and practis'd art
Is nature by and by.
'Tis thus the bud its fruit comprest
Within can't long retain:
Compliance — is it in the breast?
Love will not far remain.
Still more severely and sharply to sound her,
Thickly he chooses to scatter around her
Pleasure, and horror, and grim-visag'd pain.

He kisses soft her painted cheek,
She feels Love's pang severe:
The maiden stands, a captive meek,
And sheds her first-born tear!
Sunk at his feet, bright beams her eye,
Yet not with Love's parade;
And ah! her supple limbs deny
All service to the maid.
And thus, for the couch's voluptuous pleasure,
A dark sable veil of enrapturing measure
The night's rapid hours had in beauty array'd!

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Late lull'd to sleep on blissful bed,
She wakes from troubled rest,
Finds on her heaving bosom dead
Her dear-lov'd stranger-guest.
She falls on him, and shrieks his name,
But he ne'er wakes to hear:
They bear away his stark, stiff frame,
Quick to the flamming bier.
She hears, too, the priests universal bewailing,
She raves and she runs through the mourners assailing:
Who art thou that com'st to the deep grave so near?

She rushes on the fun'ral pile,
Her screams rend Heav'n's concave;
"My spouse," she says, with ghastly smile,
"I seek him in the grave:
"What! shall to crumbling ashes fall
"His limbs celestial might?
"Mine, mine he was, mine before all,
"Alas! but one sweet night."
"The old we bear off," thus the priests sing the lay,
"When past their long woes and slow-chilling decay;
"The young we bear off unprepar'd for the flight.

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"Our priestly doctrine, maiden, hear;
"Thy spouse he was not:—no;
"Thou lov'dst him but as Bajadere,
"And can'st no duty owe.
"Its shade pursues the corpse alone
"Where Death's still regions lie;
"Wives hasten where their lords are gone,
"Their duty bids them die!
"Resound, oh! ye trumps, to the sorrowful numbers,
"Gods, wake the day's pride from terrestrial slumbers,
"And take the young damsel in flames up on high."

All pitiless the chorus steeps
Her heart in deeper woe;
With outstretch'd arms she wildly leaps
To where the death-flames glow.
From out the fiery smoke appears
The God that cannot die;
Enfolded in his arms he bears
His lov'd one to the sky!
The Godhead rejoices at sinners repenting,
The lost ones of earth by the angels relenting
Are borne in their arms of effulgence on high!

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PROXIMITY TO THE BELOVED ONE.

Oh! I think on thee, when the sun's bright ray
Gleams on the ocean wave;
Oh! I think on thee, when the moon-beams play
On forest, fount, and cave!

And I see thee, too, when o'er yonder hill
The rolling dust-clouds rise; —
In the dead of night, when o'er crag and rill
The trembling pilgrim hies.

And I hear thee, too, when with hoarse rebound
The foaming billows swell:
And I list thee, too, when no whisper'd sound
Steals through the silent dell.

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And I'm with thee, too; for, where'er incline
Thy steps, to me thou'rt near:
But the sun is set, aud the stars will shine,
Oh! would that thou wert here!

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MIGNON.

Know'st thou the land? where fair the citron blows,
And with dark leaf the golden orange glows;
From the blue heav'n soft breathing gales descend;
The myrtle's still — the laurel scorns to bend:
Know'st thou it well?
Oh! there, oh! there,
Might I with thee, my truly lov'd, repair!

Know'st thou that house with roof on column'd height?
Bright gleam its halls, its bow'rs with fainter light;
There statues stand, and ask with looks all mild,
"What have they done to thee, my poor, wrong'd child?"
Know'st thou it well?
Oh! there, oh! there,
Might I with thee, my guardian friend, repair!

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Know'st thou that mount? its small path's cloud-capp'd
head,
Where through the mist, mules step with cautious tread?
In caverns dwell the dragon's ancient brood;
The crag rolls down, and o'er it rolls the flood:
Know'st thou it well?
Oh! there, oh! there,
Our path leads, father; — thither we 'll repair.

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THE FLOW'RET WONDROUS FAIR:

LAY OF THE CAPTIVE COUNT.

A BALLAD.

COUNT.

I know a flow'ret wond'rous fair,
And after it I long;
I fain would seek it in the air,
But feel a captive's wrong:
To me this sorrow is not slight,
For when I roam'd in Freedom's light
I had it ever near.

Mine eye from this bold turret's steep
Roams round, through ev'ry nook,
Yet cannot from embattled keep
Possess it with a look:

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Whoe'er will bring it me again,
Or is he knight, or humble swain,
My truest friend shall be.

ROSE.

I sweetly bloom, and list thy woe
Beneath thy prison grate;
Thou meanest me, the rose, I know,
Thou knight of noble state.
Thy thoughts in lofty region's tow'r
The queen of each dependent flow'r
O'er thee too must prevail,

COUNT.

Thy purple hue all life admires,
In outer garb of green;
'Tis thus that thee the maid desires
As jewel's brightest sheen.
Thy wreath exalts the fairest face,
Yet thou art not the flow'r I grace
With honour's silent meed.

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LILY.

The little rose wears haughty brow,
And strives herself to raise;
Yet will love's bridal lips avow
The snow-white lily's praise.
Whose heart rebounds from faithful breast,
And is as pure, as I, confest,
Will give the palm to me.

COUNT.

I style myself both chaste and pure,
Yes, pure from black intent:
My prison still I must endure,
And all alone lament.
Tho' thou an emblem art display'd
Of many a pure and modest maid,
What's dearer still I know.

PINK.

That other, I, the pink, must be
Here in the garden low,
Else why the warder thus on me
Such fost'ring care bestow?

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Of leaves I have a circling throng,
And scents that breathe life's vale along
With thousand varied hues.

COUNT.

The pink we never can despise,
She is the gard'ner's pride;
Now must she stand in light, now rise
Where sunbeams cannot glide.
Yet what can gladden my sad mind
Is not gay splendor's pomp refin'd;
It is a modest flow'r.

VIOLET.

I stand with bent and hidden brow,
'Tis e'en a pain to speak;
Yet will I, since 'tis fitting now,
My doleful silence break.
If I am it, thou worthy friend,
It grieves me, that I cannot send
My perfumes up to thee.

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COUNT.

The violet I value much,
It is so very shy,
And smells so sweet: yet 'tis not such
Can make my grief pass by.
'Tis not for me, I will avow,
Upon this barren mountain-brow
My darling love to find.

A maid there roams, by yonder rill,
As true as earth contains;
And many an *Ah!* she sighs — and will,
'Till I am freed from chains.
When she a small blue flow'r espies,
And when, "Forget me not," she cries,
I feel it from afar.

Yes! from afar is prov'd that might,
When two hearts love so well;
'Tis thus that 'mid my prison's night
I still in life can dwell.

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For when my heart to break is nigh,
'Tis then "Forget me not," I sigh,
And live, and love again.

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THE ALDER-KING.

A BALLAD.

Who rides so late, 'mid storm so wild?
It is the father with his child;
And fast he hath the boy in his arm,
He clasps him firmly, he holds him warm.

„My son, why hide then so timid thy face?"
„Can'st thou not, father, the Erlking trace?
„The Erlking with his crown and shroud? —"
„My son, it is a misty cloud."

„Thou lovely child, come, go with me,
„Such pretty plays will I play with thee;
„Full many a flow'ret blooms on the shore;
„Many gold vests hath my mother in store."

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„My father, my father, and hast thou not heard
„What Erlking promis'd in soft whisper'd word?"
„Be quiet; rest, my child, rest at ease;
„Thro' wither'd leaves hark! rustles the breeze."

„Wilt thou, sweet boy, go there with me?
„My daughters shall await on thee —
„My daughters, who lead there the gay nightly throng,
„Shall rock thee, and dance thee, and sing thee a song."

„My father, my father, and see'st thou there not
„The Erlking's daughter in yon dark spot?"
„My son, my son, I see it quite clear,
„So gray do the aged willows appear."

„I love thee, thy form is so fair to the sight,
„And if thou 'rt not willing, beware of my might."
„My father, my father, he throttles me fast,
„The Erlking has done me harm at last."

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The father shudder'd; and onward he hied,
Holding his agonis'd child to his side;
He reach'd his home in anguish and dread, —
But in his arms the child was dead.

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THE KING IN THULE.

A BALLAD.

There was a king in Thule's land,
Right true unto the grave,
To whom his mistress' dying hand
A golden goblet gave.

And nothing did he value more,
Each feast he drain'd it dry;
Whene'er he drank from it, ran o'er
His tear-compressing eye.

And when he was about to die
He summ'd his cities up,
And gave his heirs them willingly,
But did not give the cup.

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He sat at kingly festival
With all his knights around,
In that ancestral castle-hall
Whence baffled waves rebound.

And there the aged rev'ller stood
And drank his life's last glow;
Then dash'd into the foaming flood
The holy goblet low.

He saw it hurl'd — he saw it drink,
While yet 'twas sinking low'r;
His eyes that very moment sink —
He never drank drop more.

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NIGHT THOUGHTS.

How I do pity you, unhappy stars,
Who are so beauteous, and so proudly shine,—
Who on benighted seamen gladly beam,
Tho' all unrecompens'd by gods or men!
How I do pity you, unhappy stars,
Ye neither love, nor know what 'tis to love!
The Hours, eternal, unrestrained, conduct
Your courses through the wide expanded heav'n!
What wand'rings have ye not already made,
Since I, in love's encircling arms entwin'd,
Have you and midnight's fateful hour forgot!

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WELCOME AND FAREWELL.

My heart it beat;—to horse in haste;
'Twas done almost before 'twas thought;
The evening rock'd the wild and waste;
Night round the cliffs her veil had wrought.
The oak—a tow'ring giant stood,
And sought in garb of mist the skies,
While darkness glar'd from out the wood
With all her hundred jet-black eyes.

The moon behind a cloudy train
Peep'd thro' the haze with look of fear;
The tempests wing'd their flight amain,
And, awful, rustled in mine ear:
The night a thousand monsters fram'd,
Yet fresh and gay my feelings flow'd;
For in my veins what ardour flam'd!
And in my heart what passion glow'd!

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I gaz'd; and when our eyes were meeting,
Thy look beam'd extacy on me;
My heart at thy fond side was beating,
And all its sighs were heav'd for thee!
A zephyr with its rosy tress
Play'd round thy face in that sweet spot;
And, gods!—for me thy tenderness!—
I hop'd it,—I deserv'd it not!

Yet ah! when morn had chas'd the night,
My heart was wrung by Farewell's throe;
But in thy kiss, oh! what delight!
Tho' in thine eyes such tearful woe!
I went;—thou stood'st;—thy heart was mov'd;
On me was fix'd thy dewy sight;—
Yet what delight to be belov'd!
To love—ye gods!—oh! what delight!

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THE TEARS.

Hark! while amid yon festive throng
The foaming cup goes round;
A fair Dame speaks, whose tones along
The lattic'd hall resound.

"There is a crystal muscle-shell
"Whence gleams a living star,
"And costly pearls I know full well
"Its hidden kernel are."

"Whoe'er will bring me from the shell
"These pearls so rich and rare
"Shall have the rose, no vulgar spell,
"Which in my breast I wear."

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And many a Knight and Baron sped
As rivals for the prize;
Yet only one could find the bed
Where yon rich pearl-drop lies.

He was a youth beyond all praise,
And beauteous as the Light;
He bore a harp in peaceful days,
A sharp sword in the fight.

Rising he left his distant seat
And went unto the Dame;
His sweet lips smil'd while at her feet
He spake all free from shame.

„The muscle with the living star,
„It is that eye of thine;
„The rich and costly pearls, they are
„The tears that inly shine."

„Many, in turn, for joy and pain
„On this sad earth are given;

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"The purest and the best remain,
"A tribute kept for Heaven."

"The holy Angels gather them
"With soft and tender hand;
"And bear them in a hollow'd gem
"To yon eternal land."

"Yet ah! sometimes the Angels yield
"The bard this hallow'd right,
"For oft' by his sweet tones reveal'd
"The tear-drops spring to light."

He sweeps the harp in harmony
And ah! so sweetly sings,
That in yon Lady's quiv'ring eye
A gentle tear upsprings.

She touches with the rose her face,
The tear-drops o'er it flow,
Then gives it to the bard with grace,
Kissing the while his brow.

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"Thou hast done well, and brought to me
"The pearl that hidden lies;
"So with this rose I give to thee
"The treasure of mine eyes."

Then turn'd the fair and lovely Dame
Unto her wedded lord,
And spake, unconscious of all blame,
This serious, solemn word; —

"Thou hast perceiv'd that not from force,
"That not from pain and woe,
"But from a nobler heav'nly source
"The silent tear-drops flow."

"Then ask me not, whene'er I weep,
"Whence comes my sorrow's smart;
"Tears that the cheek in secret steep
"Exalt and ease the heart."

"Behold the flowret, on whose breast
"The evening dew is shed;"

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"By all those sparkling drops oppress
"That flowret bows its head."

"Then come the Sunbeams, bright, and gay,
"Those children of the sky,
"Sip from the flow'r the dew away, —
"It stands erect and dry." —

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CASSANDRA.

There was a sound of revelling mirth
In Troy's proud halls, before she fell;
And many a tuneful harp gave birth
To joyous musics golden swell.
All hands at rest, cease war's wild din
Weary of that long tearful strife,
For proud Pelides seeks to win
Priam's fair daughter for his wife.

Enwreath'd with laurel, countless trains
To Thymbria's altar bend their way;
And in procession o'er the plains
The Gods appear on that proud day
The Bacchanals loud lays of mirth
Thro' ev'ry echoing street resound;—
There seem'd one only heart on earth
That knew not Pleasure's lightsome bound.

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Joyless, 'midst overflowing joy,
Cassandra sought Apollo's grove,
Far from the revelry of Troy
In pensive solitude to rove!—
To the wild forests darkest glades
The prophetess in anguish fled,
And dash'd, amid those welcome shades,
The priestly garland from her head.

"All things in smiling peace rejoice,
Each heart pours forth its merry lay,
My parents list Hope's syren voice,
My sister stands in bride's array:
But I alone am doom'd to weep,
Each sweet illusion flys from me;
E'en now, thou proud embattled Steep,
I see destruction gloat o'er thee."

"I see, I see a torch burn bright,
But not alas! in Hymen's hand,
The clouds above are rob'd in light,
But not from sacrificial brand;

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I see their festival-display,
But as a prophetess I know
The venging God is on his way
To dissipate their joy in woe!"

"With frowns they chide my troublous grief,
And mock my everlasting pain,
I give my woe-worn heart relief
Alone amid the barren plain;
Cut off from joy — an outcast maid —
And laugh'd to scorn by all the gay,
My separate lot hath well display'd,
Apollo, thy all-blighting sway."

"Why send me to the deaf and blind —
To those that will not see, nor hear?
Although I speak thy truths — thy mind —
They will not truth from me revere.
Why do I see what can't avail?
That which is hidden soon must be,
And many a quiv'ring cheek will pale
While Fear unrobes its mystery!"

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"Why should I tear the veil away
Where Terror rears its threat'ning head?
Error prolong'd is Life's long day,—
Knowledge exists but for the Dead.
Remove, remove from my sad eyes
The blood thou art about to spill
Oh! how it costs me thousand sighs
To be the handle of thy will."

"Give back my blindness, God of day,
My joyous unforeseeing soul,
I ne'er have sung one happy lay
Since I have own'd thy dread controul.
Thou dost futurity unfold,
Yet tak'st the present hour away,
Thou mak'st me in my spring-time old,
Take back thy gift,—without delay."

"I ne'er have twin'd my fragrant hair
With garlanding of leaf or flow'r,
Since that fell moment of despair
When Virtue bow'd beneath thy pow'r."

Digitized by Google

"My Youth was one eternal tear,
And I have ever nurtur'd woe,
My kindred's destiny severe
Struck my sad heart a with'ring blow."

"All lives and loves, that meets my way,
With Youth's sensations deep and strong,
While my lone heart is Sorrow's prey
Amid my playmates mirthful song.
In vain for me the Spring appears,
Which bounteous Earth hath gaily deck'd;—
Life is a raging sea of tears,
On which our brightest hopes are wreck'd."

"Polyxena, I laud thy name,—
The wish that glows in thy flush'd cheeks,—
Thou hopest as a bride to claim
The bravest of the valiant Greeks.
Her breast is heav'd in pride of love,
She scarce restrains her blissful glance;
Not e'en the heav'nly hosts above
She envies in her dreaming trance."

Digitized by Google

"I too have seen him, whom my heart
Clings to with fondest love;—his eyes
To mine in tenderness impart
The secret of our sympathies.
Oh! gladly should I seek some glade,
And with my husband make it mine!
Yet oh! my love, a Stygian shade
Steps in, each night, 'twixt thee and thine."

"See Proserpine's attendant Ghosts,
As tho' their victim they defied,
Pursue my path in countless hosts,
And stand in mockery at my side.
They marr'd with a foul spectral hand
My dawning youth's first happy hour;
And now the same fell—loathsome band
Still hold me in their ruthless pow'r."

"I see the Murderers glitt'ring steel,
And mark his vengeance-glaring eye,
I cannot what I see reveal,
Nor from this coming horror fly.

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I dare not turn away my look, —
Knowing the future and the past.
I must fulfil Fate's written book
And fall on foreign ground at last."

"And even now their words resound—
Hark! list that murmuring voice of dread, —
It comes from yonder hallow'd ground,
Where Theti's mighty son lies dead! —
Fell Eris lifts her snakes in joy,
And all the Gods desert the spot;
While clouds of thunder hang o'er Troy,
Prophetic of its destin'd lot."

Digitized by Google

LONGING.

From this valley vision-bounding,
By the chilliest clouds oppress,
Could I reach the realms surrounding,
Oh! how highly were I blest!
Fairest hills I gaze on yonder
Ever young and ever green,
Had I wings I would not ponder
'Till I had to yon hills been.

Harmony around is ringing
Tones of sweet celestial rest,
And the buoyant breeze is bringing
Scented balsam to my breast;
Golden fruits I see are glowing,
Winking 'neath their leafy veil,
And the flow'rs that there are blowing
Never yield to Winter's hail!

Digitized by Google

Ah! how bright must it be gleaming,
On that ever-sunny lea!
And the breeze from yon hills streaming,
Ah! how joyous must it be!
Torrents check me, rudely roaring,
As between us grim they roll,
And their angry billows soaring
Terrify my shudd'ring soul.

There a bark is floating lightly,
Ah! but ah! the helmsman fails;
Fresh, unruffled, gleaming brightly
Are the steady, breeze-fill'd sails.
Arm'd with faith, go, boldly, — dare thee,
For the Gods will lend no hand,
Only miracles can bear thee
To the beauteous Wonder-land.

Digitized by Google

THE MAIDEN'S PLAINT.

The oak-wood rustles, the clouds contract,
A maiden sits on the shores green tract;
The waves there are dashing with might, with might,
And she sighs aloud in the gloom of night;
Her eye with long weeping is dim.

„My true heart is dead, and the world is drear,
„And farther presents not a wish, nor a fear;
„Thou Holy one, call then thy child from strife
„For I have enjoy'd every joy of life,
„I've liv'd, and have lov'd only him!"

„'Tis idle, 'tis foolish to sit there and weep;
„For sorrowing wakes not the dead from their sleep.
„Yet ask what consoles and what heals the rack'd breast
„When vanish'd love leaves it in bitter unrest,
„And I will not thy wishes oppose."

Digitized by Google

„Permit me, permit me to sit there and weep,
„Tho' sorrowing wake not the dead from their sleep.
„The dearest delight for the grief-strick'n breast
„When vanish'd love leaves it in bitter unrest
„Are love's own lamentations and woes."

Digitized by Google

"FORGET ME NOT."

There blooms a flow'r by yonder stream
  Bright as the pale Moon's silv'ry light;
It sheds around a hallow'd gleam,
  Oh! read that flowr's sweet look aright!

It sparkles like the Aether's blue,
  When not a loit'ring cloud is seen;
It is a symbol firm and true,
  And tells the heart of what hath been.

Devoid of guile, and like each star
  That sweetly gleams from out thine eyes,
With soft and warning voice afar
  "Forget, forget me not," it cries!

And when the tears of parting flow,
  Call'd forth at Duty's stern decree,

Digitized by Google

If it should on thy pathway grow,
And sigh — "forget not — think of me!"

My soul's enrapturing treasure, hear
The voice that speaks from ev'ry leaf;—
Its dropping dew — is thy sweet tear, —
"Forget me not" — its sigh of grief!

Digitized by Google

THE WANDERER'S NIGHT-LAY.

I come from yonder craggy steep,
While Ocean roars, the valleys sleep;—
I wander on;—my joy is rare—
And ev'ry sigh is asking—"where"?

Alas! I find the Sun too cold—
The blossoms faded,—Nature old;—
Here ev'ry word is but a sound;—
I feel I am on foreign ground.

My promis'd land, where art thou flown,
Oft' sought, desir'd—but never known?
Thou land, where smiles Hope's brightest glow,
Thou land, where all my roses blow!

The land, my dreams have sought in vain,—
Where all the Dead awake again;—

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The land, which speaks the words I know,
And hath what fails me here below!

I wander on, — my joy is rare, —
And ev'ry sigh is asking "where?"
And ev'ry breeze brings back the sound —
"Where thou art not, — thy joy is found!" —

Digitized by Google

THE SOLITARY TEAR.

What means this solitary tear?
It dims mine aching eye,
And tells of times that still are dear
To lingering sympathy.

It had a glistening sisterhood;
Not one is left behind;
My joys and sorrows, like their flood,
Are mingled with the wind.

Those eyes, — two blue and twinkling stars, —
Like melting clouds are gone;
Which on my heart, 'mid Passion's jars,
With smiling radiance shone.

My love itself hath found its bier,
Blown like a breath away!
Then flow, thou old, and lonely tear,
To where thy sisters lay.

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FROM GRILLPARZER'S TRAGEDY OF SAPPHO.

A COMPARISON BETWEEN MAN'S AND WOMAN'S LOVE.

Who boasts himself not ignorant of life
And passion, — man and woman, — knows full well,
Man's love must not be measur'd by the glow
That sheds its fervour round the heart of Woman.
Man's eager soul is ever quick to impulse,
A ready slave to changeful destiny.
Uncheck'd he steps along life's open path
Encircled by the dawning glance of hope;
With strength and courage, as with sword and shield,
Arm'd for the strifes that promise glory's meed.
The Heart's internal world of stillness seems
To him a thing too narrow and confin'd;
His restless spirit strives with things external.
And if perchance he meets with Love, he stoops
To cull the beauteous flow'ret from the ground; —
Possessing it — he feels a sort of joy,
And plants it gaily on his helm beside

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His other trophies. — He can never know
The still and mighty flame that Love awakes
In Woman's breast; — how all her Being, — Thoughts, —
Desires, — revolve around this single point!
How all her Wishes, — like to unfledg'd birds
Flutt'ring in fear about their parent nest, —
Circle round Love, — her cradle — and her grave!
For Life with all its varied scenes hang like
A jewel round the neck of new-born Love!
Man loves; but in his ample bosom there
Is room for much beside mere love; and much,
Which Woman deems transgression, he allows
Himself as frolic jest and joyous sport;
And deems himself entitled to a kiss
Where'er he chance to meet it. 'Tis in truth
Not well that so it is, — yet so it is.

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GOD IN A STORM.

Thou awful one! who can 'fore thee
And thy dread thunder stand?
The Lord is mighty, and we flee
O'erwhelm'd at his command.

He lays encamp'd in gloomy night,
The trembling nations groan,
And fell Destruction wings its flight
From round his beamy throne.

He wields, red-glowing in his hand,
The lightning of his ire,
And pours his thunders o'er the land
In one vast sea of fire.

See trembling Nature recognize
The Lord and his disdain,
While blaze around the wond'ring skies
And the affrighted plain!

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Who shall protect me — doom'd to death,
Should He, who dwells above,
And crumbles systems in a breath,
Not spare me in His love?

We have a good and pitying God,
E'en while His anger glows,
He rules us with a sparing rod,
The best friend Man e'er knows.

THE END.

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